The Ottomans: The Greatest Empire

Ilber Ortayli

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ORTAYLI

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İlber Ortaylı

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TRANSLATOR-EDITOR'S PREFACE

The book you are about to read is the work of one of Turkey's most eminent, erudite and charismatic historians, who is also the current director of the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul. Professor lber Ortayl, born in a refugee camp in Austria in 1947, the son of Crimean Tatars, studied and taught at universities in Turkey and abroad and has published scholarly treatments of various aspects of Ottoman, Turkish and Russian history. In recent years he has been particularly engaged in attempting to foster the Turkish public's interest in history and to contribute to a more rounded and nuanced view of the Ottoman state, society and legacy. This led him to write a string of popular-historical studies, one of which is Osmanl'y Yeniden Kefetmek (Rediscovering the Ottoman Empire). He has also hosted, and continues to host, televised 'history lessons', which have met with critical and popular acclaim.

This book, first published in 2006, is a collection of talks by the author on central themes and institutions in Ottoman political, diplomatic, social and cultural life. According to Ortayl's preface to the Turkish edition, the preparation of Osmanl'y Yeniden Kefetmek was motivated by the upsurge in public interest in the Ottoman past that accompanied the celebration in 1999 of the 700th anniversary of the founding of the Ottoman Empire. The reception of the book, published by the Istanbul-based Tima Publishing House, was most impressive. Osmanl'y Yeniden Kefetmek was the number nine bestseller in 2006 and has to date gone though twenty-six reprints, with 164,000 copies being sold. These facts would seem to bear out Ortayl's bold claim in his preface that 'Turkish society started to show an interest in that seven-century-long phase of its history', an interest that went further than superficial heroising.

Prompted by the popularity of the book, and the stimulating interpretations, explanations, descriptions and details it contains, I suggested to seven of my final-year students in the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Boaziçi (Bosphorus) University, Istanbul, that they each translate three chapters of it for their graduation projects. The names of these students are Muhammed Bahadr Çakmak, Ahsen Ekmekyermezolu, Nilay Idr, Sezin Kuruçay, Esra Maden, Asl Polat and Çala Ulupnar. One of the many challenges that these Turkish native-speaker students faced when working on their projects, and that I (an English native-speaker) faced when editing their final drafts - which often amounted to substantial retranslation - was transforming the Turkish source into an English text that would be maximally meaningful and relevant to Anglophone readers. After all, the talks reproduced in Osmanl'y Yeniden Kefetmek had obviously been targeted at a Turkish audience. While ruminating on common prejudices and problems in contemporary Turkey, for

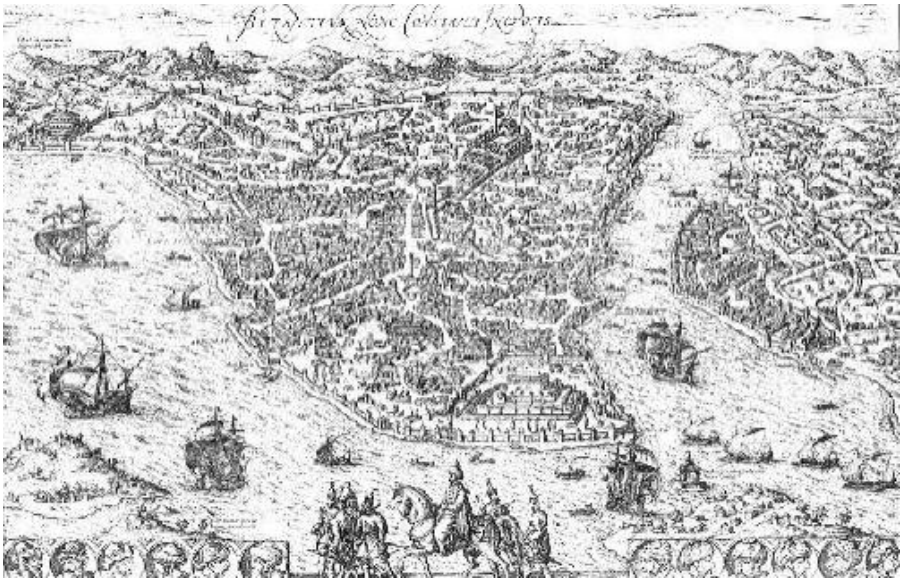
instance, the author often addresses his readers explicitly as fellow-Turks and inheritors of the Ottoman legacy. He also relies on his readers having a basic knowledge of Turkish history, which leads him to leave some concepts, personalities and events unexplained. While preparing the text for publication, I certainly did not want to expunge the author's inimitable voice, style and tone. I did, however, make some minor modifications that render the English text rather less entre nous than the Turkish one. Furthermore, my students and I added numerous footnotes, glosses and a glossary to make historical contexts and terms more understandable to English-speaking readers, who might lack the historical and cultural background of Ortayl's initial Turkish readers. We hope these translatorial interventions will enhance your reading of this fascinating book and make your (re)discovery of the Ottoman Empire an even more rewarding experience.

Jonathan Ross, Istanbul
August 2008

ISTANBUL: THE BREEZE FROM THE PAST

'Be makam- Konstantiniyye el Mahmiyye'
(Constantiniye — the protected domain)

For centuries, the city we now call Istanbul was referred to in the decrees and records of the Ottoman Empire as Constantiniye, 'the protected domain'. All over the Arab world and throughout the history of Islam, the centre of the so-called 'Well-Protected Domains' retained this name. Nobody ever belittled or repudiated the name of the ruler who had founded the city. And there is no doubt that this official name was not used for formal business alone. Up until the very end of the empire, some books still contained a plate on their first page, on which the place of publication was given as 'Konstantiniyye'. Ottoman Istanbul never regarded it as burdensome to bear the name of Constantine the Great. Hence, there is no need for us to be oversensitive when it comes to this name.



It was only natural that the name Constantine disturbed the Turks during the turbulent days of the War of Independence. This was because the Greeks, as one of the occupying powers, attempted to have the name of King Constantine, then ruler of Greece, supplant that of the ancient Constantine the Great. And this is why the name was officially deleted. Of course, this great city had many other names. One of these was 'Nea Roma' (New Rome). The only other city on earth that could compare in size to Istanbul, after the latter's foundation in the fourth century, was Rome in Italy, and once Istanbul managed to become the centre of a stable, prosperous and powerful empire within the space of just a couple of centuries, Nea Roma left its old counterpart far behind. The older Rome collapsed, became poorer, disintegrated, and saw its population decrease; the newer one, in contrast, began to develop.

Within two centuries of the foundation of Constantinople, there would be no city on earth larger than it. Alexandria in Egypt could not compare, and neither could Rome in Italy. Although an important religious centre, Jerusalem was small in size. Antioch no longer exhibited the splendour of ancient Syria, while Athens was in ruins. Nowhere could one find a city as splendid as Istanbul. Perhaps such cities had existed before, such as Damascus in the post-Umayyad period and Baghdad in the post-Abbasid period. Maybe during their glory days Isfahan and, before it, Qazvin and Nishapur, could have been counted as 'great cities'. However, it is undeniable that for one thousand years there was no city more magnificent than Istanbul.

In the middle of the sixth century, two architects, Anthemius of Miletus (today's Milet in southern Turkey) and Isidorus of Tralleis

(today's Aydn) built a great shrine or church on the plot of a burnt-out church, the name of which was Hagia Sophia, meaning 'Holy Wisdom'. This shrine might have only just survived until now, had significant buttressing and restoration work not been carried out by Sinan the Architect in the sixteenth century. All the same, the building of Hagia Sophia was the first time that a human being had managed to construct a dome on columns and arches, and not even the Romans and Byzantines, let alone other civilisations, would be able to develop such a plan of similar size. Until the erection in the sixteenth and seventeenth century of the great temples that would beautify the Ottoman capital even more, no building would be able to match the Hagia Sophia in terms of its height or the size of its dome.

Of course, we should not forget the architecture of the Renaissance in Italy. But for nearly one thousand years, Istanbul and its great temple were able to retain the attention of other nations. It was a privilege to go and see Istanbul. Some fortunate individuals from Italy, Greece, Syria, the Caucasus and the Crimea, from far-off Russia and even from Scandinavia, which was then inhabited entirely by hunter-gatherers, saw it as a blessing to have the chance to travel to Istanbul. Let us not forget the group of Russians and Swedes, the so-called Varangians, who were part of the household troops of the Byzantine Empire. And then there were those Russians who came to the city for the purpose of pilgrimage and described it with admiration and astonishment.

On the whole European continent, there was not one city that could compete with Istanbul, or Constantinople as it was then known. How could it? In its golden age, Cologne had a population of just ten thousand. Italy was home to a number of expanding cities, but even there the beautiful Venice, Pisa, ancient Rome and emerging Florence had to wait until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to compete with Istanbul. It was impossible to match Istanbul's monuments. This is why, at the time of the Ottoman Empire, when people wanted to refer to Istanbul it was enough to say 'polis', the Greek for 'city', in the same way that the city had much earlier been known as 'urbis', the Latin for the same.

As a result, Stinpoli, meaning 'to the city' or 'in the city', came to be the old name for Istanbul. During the siege by the Muslim Umayyad dynasty, the expression 'Istinbol' established itself. In the course of history, the Turks started to use another word similar to the earlier name for the city. In the eighteenth century, Islambol was used on some inscriptions and gravestones, and certainly also on official decrees and records. This was a clear sign that the city had become Islamized. However, this expression reflected the peculiar ethnic consciousness of the eighteenth century and did not survive for long,

fading from use by the nineteenth century.

Ottoman Istanbul was pompous and glorious, so that the attention of all the nations of the east and west lay on this city. There may have been equally populous cities in Iran, namely Isfahan, in Muslim India (Delhi), and in Central Asia. However, it was Istanbul's richness, its original architecture and libraries, rather than its population, which attracted attention. Caravans consisting of camel after camel would carry books to the city and Istanbul's libraries overflowed with books.

The wealth of Istanbul gave rise to various names for the city in the languages of different nations: the Abode of Sovereignty, the House of Felicity, the Sublime Porte, the House of the Holy Caliphate and the Gate of Bliss were names for the city used by ordinary people up until the very end of the empire. Indeed, the names for Istanbul are countless. Its name in Slavic languages is Tsargrad, meaning the city where the Tsar or emperor lives. This name is still used in Bulgarian. As far as I know, the board in the waiting lounge at Sofia Airport still refers to Istanbul as Tsargrad.

Because all of these names were used for the city that would be the sole and greatest metropolis of the world for one thousand years, we should not reject any of them. There were many people who wanted to capture the city. But its magnificent walls prevented them. Our ancestors captured this city using cannons, that is, the firearms of the modern age, and then defended it. Initially they converted great old churches into mosques, a conservatory measure born of necessity. Then they built newer mosques, the construction of which reached its peak in the sixteenth century.

Istanbul followed a population policy that was well-suited to its needs. In order to increase the population of the city, not only were Muslims brought by force from Anatolia but also Turkish-speaking Greek Christians from the Karaman region in Central Anatolia, followed by Greek-speakers and, finally, Armenians. Indeed, although Istanbul had never occupied a special place in the history and religious hierarchy of the Armenians, it was made the patriarchate for the entire Armenian community, with all the organisational trimmings this entailed.

As a result of intense Jewish immigration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Istanbul and Thessaloniki emerged as the two most important centres of the Jewish world. Various names for Istanbul indicate that the city still exists in the legends and tales of different nations. Even now, no other city is so frequently mentioned in the folklores of other nations as Istanbul. This aspect of the city should certainly be emphasised.

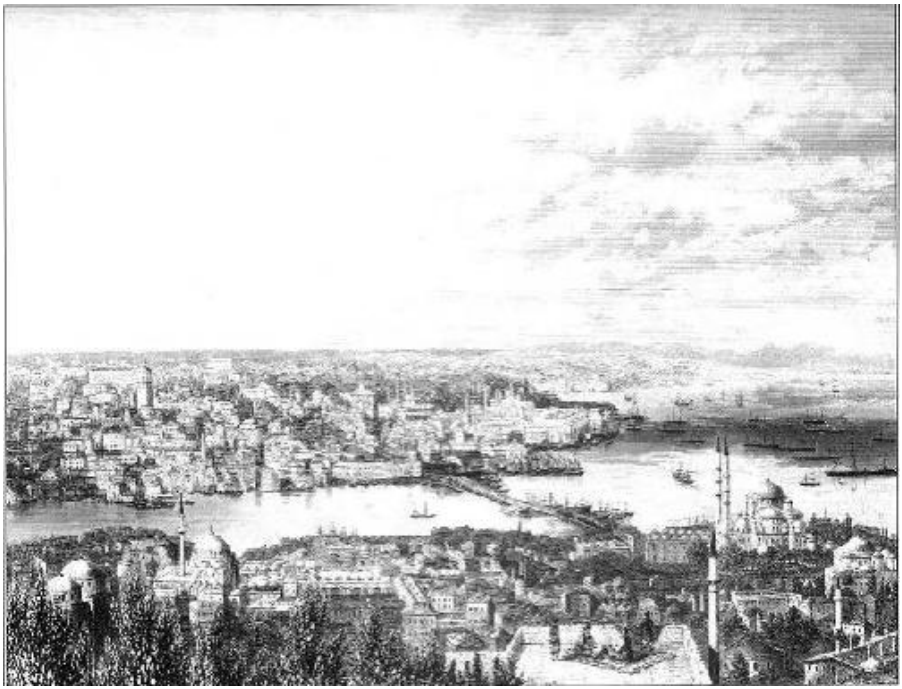
Istanbul was a city of celebration and ceremony. Nowhere

else really do we encounter the formal conventions and rituals that we find in Istanbul. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish protocol dominated European palaces. French court etiquette and protocol only began to influence other nations with the reign of Louis XIV, towards the end of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century.

When attending a meeting of university principals in the late 1940's, the ex-principal of Istanbul University, my deceased teacher Sddk Sami Onar, stated, 'Mine is the oldest university. I represent it, so my position in the protocol should be fixed accordingly.' Naturally, universities such as the Sorbonne, Prague and Cambridge had to grant precedence to Istanbul, which had had a university since the age of Theodosius II, that is, in the fifth century.

Throughout the entire Middle Ages, Constantinople, which we also know as the Byzantine Empire, was the only place that fascinated other peoples, who in turn tried to emulate it. Books were written on the subject of the ceremonies of this city in order that people could find out about them. The emperors themselves even wrote books on the form of ceremonies, such as De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae, the work of Emperor Constantine Porfirogenetus in the tenth century. There is no doubt that this imperial protocol persisted within the Ottoman tradition from the fifteenth century on.

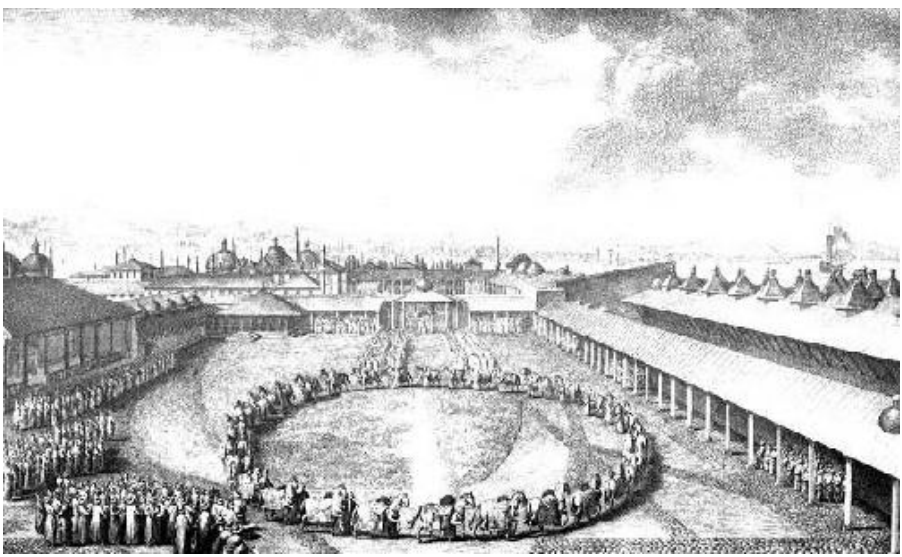
How the ruler would live in this city, his daily contacts with statesmen in the palace, how he would eat and how certain ceremonies would be held on particular days, especially the ceremony accompanying the walk to Friday prayers - all these were set down in great detail. These ceremonies were quite significant, not only for the people in the empire but for the entire Islamic world. Besides being a day of ceremonies, Friday was a day when justice would show its face, when people from the lowest strata of society, often coming from far-off villages, would make contact with the ruler and his viziers. Among the petitions called Rikab- Humayun (The Imperial Stirrup), which people would submit by grabbing the saddle of the Sultan's horse while he was passing by, there were not only Turkish documents but also those written in Greek and Slavic languages. This was a tradition that continued even into the nineteenth century. These petitions are accessible in the archives.



As we see then, the empire was a world empire and Istanbul was its capital. Every ceremony was an opportunity to demonstrate this. For instance, every three months the salary of the Janissary Corps[1] was distributed, a ceremony that had to be held in the palace. The salary to be given to each individual Janissary was kept in leather bags, and high-ranking officers and soldiers of each corps assembled in the area. The sound of the *gülbank*[2] and *gulgule*[3] produced by thousands of people was actually fairly harmonic. In today's Turkish, we use the word *gulgul* to denote tumult or disorderly noise; however, this was not the case then. The pageantry of the event, and the slogans chanted during the distribution of the salary, used to fascinate the foreign envoys present in the palace courtyard. Embassy delegates, after all, would attend this ceremony, as this was supposed to be a very important day. The enthronement was celebrated by means of a procession through the city. Likewise, after the Sultan had girded his sword in Eyüp, his procession would follow a route on land or water that was supposed to render him visible in every part of the city.

In the middle of Ramadan, the sultan, the caliph of all Muslims, would pay a ceremonial visit to the Holy Mantle of the Prophet and the sacred relics section of the palace, after which the special Holy Mantle procession would take place amidst much pomp. After this deeply religious ceremony, trays of baklava wrapped in silk cloths and prepared in the palace kitchens for distribution among the *Kapkulu* Corps[4] were laid in front of the Imperial Kitchen, with one

tray being allocated to ten soldiers. After the first tray of this Ramadan gift was taken by the chief weapons-bearer and his entourage on behalf of the Sultan, officially the first janissary, two soldiers from each corps would haul away one of the trays in a disciplined manner and, led by significant members of their division such as the supervisor of the palace's servants and female slaves, the water-carrier, the chief and the officer in charge of the ceremony, they would exit through the gate. From there, the baklava procession would head to the barracks accompanied by *gulgule* and much pageant, passing through the applauding crowds lining up along Divanyolu (Chancery Road). The trays and silk cloths would be brought back the next day.



While wedding ceremonies were held for sultanas, the daughters of sultans, none were for princes, though the latter did have ostentatious circumcision ceremonies arranged for them. These ceremonies were also another occasion for the *gulgule* and lavish displays of the city's soldiers, tradesmen and *ulema* (Muslim scholars). In the course of these ceremonies, ordinary residents of Istanbul would spill out on to the streets, as would artisans and acrobats, and something of a trade fair would materialise in this way.

All of these were thousand-year-old eastern customs. Similar ceremonies were also observed in Iran and the Byzantine Empire; however, the most sophisticated ones took place in Ottoman Istanbul. These customs changed in the nineteenth century and Istanbul entered a new phase. First of all, the sultan's contact with the public took on a different form. But even then, the old customs continued. For instance,

everybody would watch the Friday ceremony. Rooms were prepared for women so that they could watch it. Security was maintained. In addition to Muslim soldiers, non-Muslim sergeants, lieutenants and privates were included in the greeting troop for the Friday ceremony. This was because the emperor leading the Friday ceremony was nominally the last Roman ruler and the ruler of all these earthly communities. Thus, communities had to pay their tributes to the ruler. At the same time, Friday parades were ceremonies where imperial protocol became established. Hence, it was possible for ambassadors and even for foreigners with no official status to watch this ceremony.

For example, one could see foreign ladies and non-Muslim Turkish women gathering in a corner and watching the ceremony. The Sword Procession was another significant ceremony. Try to imagine the procession of the girded Sultan from the district of Eyüp to the heart of the city and his throne. Until the very last days of the empire, this really was a very impressive ceremony, so much so that its sacredness had to be recognized not just by Ottoman society but by the whole world. During World War I, the last Sultan girded his sword on the same day that he took the throne and participated in the enthronement ceremony. The city was then under bombardment from the British. People were throwing nails and bombs with their bare hands. The procession advanced from Eyüp. Sultan Mehmet Vahideddin VI announced that the city would not be bombarded that day, and indeed not a single bomb exploded. After all, this was protocol and the Ottoman Empire was one of the great states, even if it was the belligerent party. The enemy respected the ruler and his throne. The ceremonies in Istanbul and the imperial protocol were a system respected by the whole eastern world. This should be emphasized. Unfortunately, much more research remains to be done on the protocol, yet day by day the importance of the Empire's procedures is becoming ever clearer.

Up until the nineteenth century, Istanbul could look down on other cities on account of its beauty. If we, as Turks, can pull ourselves together, it may be able to do so again. Where can one find another city with such beauty and such great potential for development, one that possesses such a rich legacy? Which city has such a silhouette? The beauty of Istanbul fascinates the entire world, while its inner chaos tortures its inhabitants. For the last fifty years, everything has been done to destroy its beauty, yet it still remains attractive.

Therefore, the areas of Istanbul where these ceremonies took place must be preserved very well. Where are they? Sultanahmet, the stretch of the street we call Divanyolu from Sultanahmet and on to at least Beyazt Square and the neighbourhoods of Aksaray and

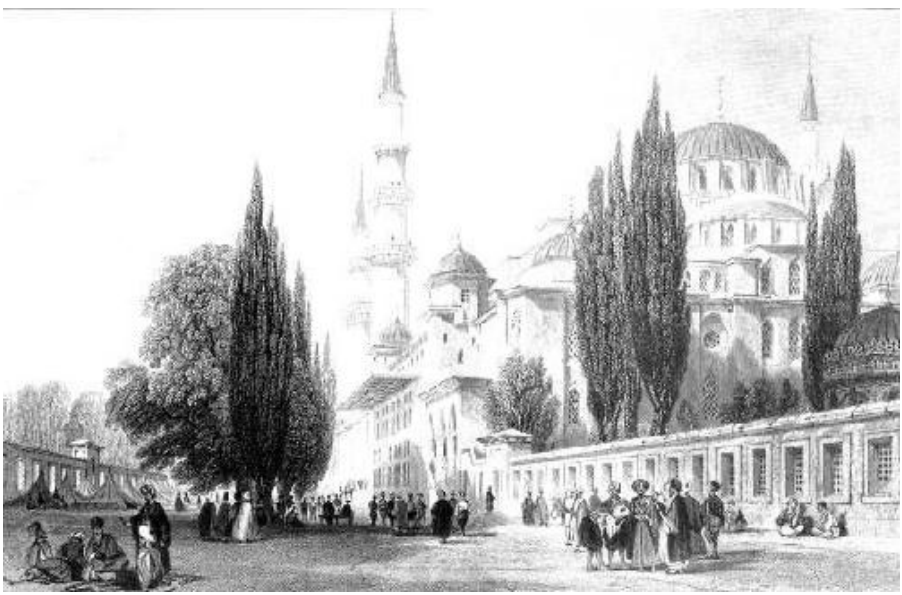
Süleymaniye. Unfortunately, we have not so far been able to preserve these areas. If these roads and places cannot be preserved, it will not be possible to protect, understand and resurrect either the six-century-long history of the Ottoman Empire, five centuries of which centred around Istanbul, or one thousand years of Roman history. And this long history is for us to preserve. Those who own this land have not only certain privileges but also certain obligations to meet and burdens to bear. To preserve and maintain this area of three square kilometres is a binding duty.

SINAN THE ARCHITECT

The age of Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver, or Süleyman the Magnificent as he is referred to in the West, is known as the heyday of the Ottoman Empire and possibly even the most glorious era in Turkish history. The histories of mighty nations contain such periods marked by melancholy and incident, though the duration of this period varies from case to case. Some estimate that the golden age of the Ottoman Empire lasted two and a half centuries and divide the remaining history of the Empire into periods of foundation and decline. Our focus here is not on the geographical and historical features of empires. Yet it is certain that the reign of Sultan Süleyman is not the only period in history to have been viewed in retrospect with a certain nostalgia. For centuries after the forty-four year rule of Sultan Süleyman, his reign was regarded as a model, and this perception has survived down to the present thanks to the style, sentiment and even criticism of manifold historians and writers on politics.

As for literature, this period brought forth the greatest poets in Ottoman and Turkish literary history. We are still trying to understand who these people were, what it was that they were enthusing about, and what made their art so special. One often hears the lament that ‘no one reads old books any more’. But it is not the fault of these books if they are not read, but rather that of those Turkish youth who speak and write with a vocabulary of just one thousand (largely ‘modern Turkish’) words, and of the adults and educationalists who have raised these youngsters in this way. I strongly believe that once we Turks begin to learn more about our literature and language and conduct research more effectively, these ‘old books’ will be seen as treasures worth rediscovering. Just think that, during the age of such great poets, Süleyman the Lawgiver and Hürrem Sultan, that is, a sultan truly deserving of the title ‘Emperor’ and his favourite wife, composed poems of some quality. Significant masters of painting and the art of miniature also lived in this age. Hundreds upon hundreds of books from across the East were brought

to Istanbul on caravans. The libraries of Istanbul were full of the most valuable eastern manuscripts. But Istanbul also gathered works from the West. One of Süleyman the Magnificent's prized viziers, the stately Ibrahim Pasha[5], who would eventually fall foul of politics and plunge from being 'Ibrahim the Favoured' to 'Ibrahim the Butchered' almost managed to bring Venetian taste and the Renaissance to Istanbul. To give one example: when Ibrahim Pasha returned from the 1526 Mohбcs campaign in Hungary, bringing back from the province of Buda a statute-group of Apollo, Hercules and Diana, he had this sculpture erected in front of the palace bearing his name, which is now used as the Islamic Works Museum, an act so contentious that it eventually precipitated a rebellion.



During this era, Turkish architecture came to be less shaped by local peculiarities and more subject to centralisation. For instance, when you look at a mosque built during the reign of Mehmet the Conqueror (1432-1481) in today's Greece, as in Morea, Athens or Ioannina, you can see the impact of the final phase of the Byzantine era, the period of the Palaeologus dynasty. Mosques in this style were even to be found in Istanbul itself. In the 16th century, however, medreses (Islamic religious schools), mosques and fountains constructed in a distinct style emerged across the Empire, from Bosnia to Aleppo in today's Syria and as far as Egypt, as if they had been built to a standard plan issued by a Ministry of Public Works. One genius played a pivotal role in this centralisation process: Sinan the Master Architect.

So who was Sinan the Architect? We know that he was a devirme, a Christian forced-recruit to the Imperial Army. Those children who were recruited into the Engineering Corps or the army's own Royal Court of Architects were able to begin their military service later than was the case with other devirmes. This is because they had to be masters or students of a specific art or craft. Much has been made of the ethnic origin of some of these men, but it is not possible to determine ethnic origin in a sound manner. Sinan the Architect was an architect for the Ottoman Empire and an Ottoman himself. And these are no empty words, for, as we shall see, Sinan really did transcend all local traits and ethnic attributes.

An architect recruited into the Royal Court of Architects would, of course, have been a soldier, and an officer at that. Why did Sinan travel across the Empire? The reason is that during long campaigns, there were always bridges and water resources in need of repair. Warehouses and depots in which the army could be quartered had to be maintained and, of course, mosques were waiting to be built or restored. To undertake these projects, an architect had to develop an awareness of local art-forms and materials and learn how to apply them. There was a need to employ local craftsmen too. This is why architects rapidly acquired a cosmopolitan vision and enjoyed opportunities and an education of which, even today, students of architecture can only dream.

Today we do not have the possibility to take architecture students around Italy, England, Egypt, China and India, to have them comment on the works of art before their eyes, and to introduce them to the great artisans and architects of these lands. We should thus appreciate how lucky architects such as Sinan were to learn their skills on the territory of the Ottoman Empire, which then stretched across three continents and incorporated many of the major civilizations of its day.

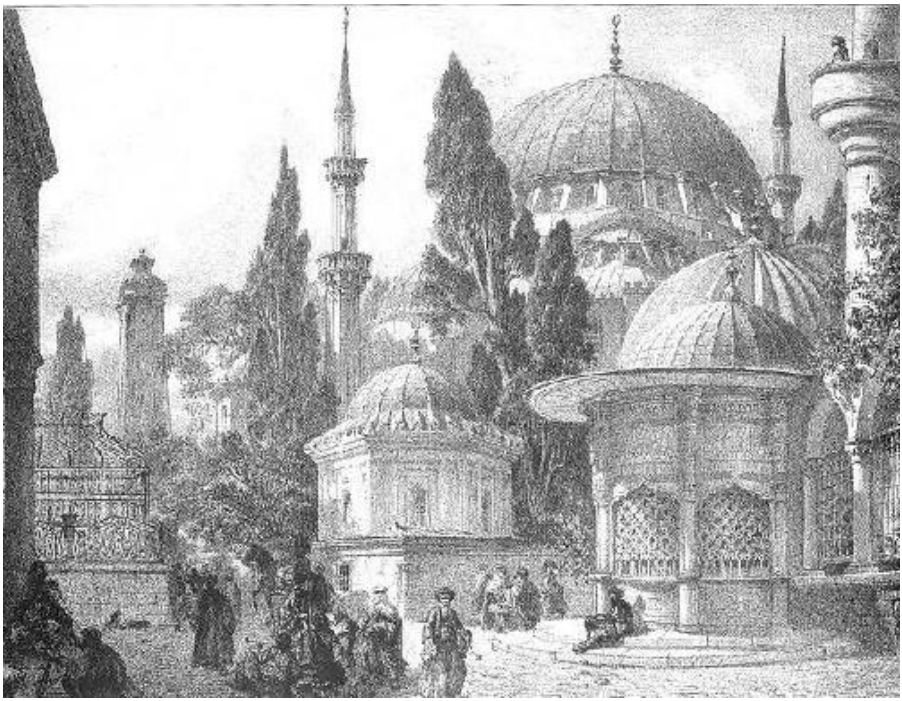
Within a very short space of time, Sinan and his ilk became versed in the geographical conditions and materials of the entire Empire, familiarised themselves with the distinct styles of individual craftsmen, and managed to develop a standard architecture. To such an extent that one does not need to be an expert in architecture to recognise that the Osman Shah Mosque in Trikala in Greece, the mosques of Aleppo, and certain buildings in Istanbul are the work of one architect: Sinan. Possessing such a unique style is the prerogative of geniuses.

Through the contributions of Sinan and others, Turkish art passed through a period which we have come to designate as the period of 'Ottoman art'. This coincided with a new era in the administration of the state. The sixteenth century saw the adoption of

a style of administration that was more orthodox and conservative in terms of religion. People began to embrace the literature of the Ancient Middle East and of Islam. Indeed, Ebus-suud Efendi, the ultimate religious authority in the Empire (a function which would later be officially assigned to the Sheikh ul-Islam) was also deemed to be the highest authority in literary matters. Meanwhile, individuals like Molla Kaabz, who proposed a more conservative interpretation of life, were in vogue. Mysticism prevailed in every field of folk literature and divan literature, as it even did in poetry and prose. Of course, it was inevitable that the literature of that time would have some degree of profundity.

The area within the boundaries of the state was rightfully referred to as *Orbis Ottomanorum*, or the 'World of the Ottomans'. The borders of the Empire stretched from the boundaries of today's Hungary in the west to Georgia in the east, and from the plains of Ukraine in the north to the province of Habesh in modern Ethiopia. Finally, in the course of the sixteenth century, other territory was added, namely the so-called *Garp Ocaklari*[6] of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, the land in the basin of the Red Sea as far as Yemen, and the Persian Gulf.

Try to picture it: the Empire we are talking about encompassed every religion and an incredible number of languages. A wise person with the possibility to travel around the Empire, to observe and learn, would doubtless have turned out to be extremely creative. Even today no group of people could be said to enjoy such an opportunity. The Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century was a military empire and, notwithstanding the limitations of military life, it gave a certain minority the chance to discover many things and thus both learn rapidly and advance new models. This great patchwork of religions, languages and races had very little in common with the colonial empires of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, since the Ottoman Empire was a commonwealth of countries. People within the Empire enjoyed 'vertical equality'. This meant that, in both theory and practice, every single inhabitant of the Empire had the chance to be promoted upwards and hold a position in a decision-making body at the centre of the state.



Alongside religious law, a well-respected customary law was applied, while Christians and Jews lived under the laws of their own communities. Indeed, for the Greek Orthodox community, this was the period we call *Turkokratia*, when the texts and jurisprudence of Late Byzantine law still held sway. The Empire was huge; there was not yet, however, anything like the extravagance in civil life that the empires of the Modern Age would display. To be sure, one of the main concerns of the time was that the extensive resources that made the Empire rich, and the use of these resources, would lead public institutions, rulers and administrators to lose their authority and become set in their ways. While the mosques, fountains, medreses and great covered bazaars were attractive buildings, Topkapı Palace, for all its elegance, was not the most beautiful and ornate building in sixteenth century Istanbul.

As the great Ottoman historian Halil nalck has pointed out, the state and land were managed by people who possessed wealth and security. In the 1500's, the income of a sanjakbey[7] was around 12,000 pieces of gold, while the estate of the wealthiest merchant in Bursa could have amounted to as much as 4,000 pieces of gold. It was people with this financial capacity who created the works of art we have mentioned. Similarly, members of the *ulema* class, who enjoyed high salaries, used their wealth to promote new artistic projects.

Being an architect in Ottoman society did not mean simply

being a master builder. The chief architect had the authority to determine the height of a building, to decide whether or not a balcony could protrude over a street and, in the event of a decision being violated, to order the demolition of a building. This is how a ban on the erection of high buildings in Sultanahmet Square, designed to preserve the cisterns underneath, was maintained until the end of the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth and particularly twentieth centuries, however, buildings flouting this rule appeared.

In terms of its functions and organisation, the Royal Court of Architects was a part of the Janissary Corps. Anyone who entered this organisation would find themselves absorbed into a certain culture, that is, the culture of the Ottoman imperial court, and would develop a distinct form of personality, one from which several great geniuses blossomed.

The number of works Master Sinan actually produced is still a matter of controversy. People continue to discuss his buildings that have disappeared, the ones still standing, and his method of design. Although none of his plans have survived, his paper notebooks do contain miniature plans and drawings. We know, moreover, that every day Sinan the Architect constructed models using Lego-like material, developing these models and using them to get a sense of the environment of the structure in question. We should not forget that, in the period we are concerned with, there were no railways, no air transportation. It was impossible for this architectural general to serve simultaneously in all four corners of the Empire and to supervise the construction of every single building in person. It is quite clear that he led an architectural school and that there were master craftsmen and other architects and apprentices who grasped his style and technique.

This is how buildings bearing Sinan's hallmark and reflecting his perspective shot up throughout the Empire, even in places he was unable to visit personally. Sinan the Architect was a genius who conferred his own style and the ambiance of the Ottoman centre upon the geography and art of the Empire. Today, the district of Süleymaniye in Istanbul, the location of Sinan's modest yet charming tomb, can be seen as the quintessence of Sinan's artistry, manifesting as it does the unity of style and originality. With an area of just 1.5 square kilometres, Süleymaniye is central to the identity of every Turk. It is the Turk's title deed over these lands. And the lac*kadı*aisical attitude of Turkish citizens towards Süleymaniye, our abandoning of this district to the tumult of the metropolis, is nothing less than an act of suicide; an act, moreover, which will be a source of great shame for us in the eyes of future generations.

The mansion in Sultanahmet known as the Green House, which has been restored by the Turkish Touring and Automobile Club,

is today being used as a hotel. Furniture from Milan has been installed in it, some of it original, some not. All the same, the Club is one of the main organisations capable of keeping alive that Sultanahmet atmosphere, which is disappearing day by day. Soukçeme Street, which I remember from my youth as a pile of ruins, has emerged as a venue that could reveal something of this atmosphere and offer visitors to Istanbul accommodation and a place to relax in tranquillity. One of the buildings in Soukçeme Street houses a library that may be considered one of Istanbul's countless treasures, namely the personal library of the Istanbul-lover and expert Çelik Gülersoy. What makes this library special is its rich collection of domestic and foreign travellers' accounts about Istanbul and monographs on the Byzantine and Ottoman periods.

Undoubtedly the most significant architectural work situated between Hagia Sophia and Soukçeme Street is the Cafer Aa Medrese, which dates back to the Classical Age in Ottoman history[8]. This building, which is managed by the Turkish Cultural Services Foundation, is a venue for exhibitions and lectures on Ottoman arts such as calligraphy and paper marbling.

DEVSIRME

The practice of *devşirme*, the recruitment of boys for the Ottoman army, is one of the topics that has most occupied scholars of Ottoman history. In brief, *devşirm*e was introduced in response to the need for young blood in the *Sipahi* [9]and Janissary Corps, which were branches of the *Kapıkul*u Corps. Christian boys were recruited to the army, but there is no evidence of a Jewish youngster ever being drafted. The reason for this was neither anti-Semitism nor anti-Judaism but the fact that the Jews constituted an urban community. One of the guiding principles of the phenomenon of *devşirme* was that urban boys were not to be recruited, because they were shrewd and likely to be involved in certain movements or tendencies. They would have developed their own cultural personalities and identities, so that a corps would not be able to impose on them the required streamlined and homogenous identity.

A frequently repeated misconception is that Muslims were not recruited either. In general this was the case, yet there were exceptions, which are detailed in the entry on *devşirme* in the authoritative *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Boys from some Muslim villages were recruited, because the villagers actually requested it.

Devşirme was carried out every few years rather than every year, because the need for it was determined on the basis of the number of soldiers in the army. Generally the number of boys recruited was limited to a few thousand. Sometimes it could reach five

or six thousand, but it would never be more than this. Some historians from the Balkans and other Christian writers incapable of consulting the Ottoman sources have argued inaccurately that the Ottomans recruited the whole young generation into the army and 'Turkified' them, thereby preventing the Balkan youth from revolting or even declaring independence. These spurious arguments have no basis in reality and have been refuted by other Balkan historians who apply proper methods of historical research, such as Vasiliki Papoulia from Greece.

Depending on the need for soldiers at a certain juncture, sometimes it was not just boys from the Balkans who were recruited but also boys from Central Anatolia. It is well-known that Sinan the Architect was recruited from this region to the Royal Corps of Architects. Devirme, which was carried out even in the Caucasus, was undertaken by expert authorities and clerks renowned for their honesty, who had a good understanding of physiognomy and were able to estimate the actual capacity of a boy. These authorities and clerks would visit certain regions and recruit especially boys living in villages. As mentioned above, devirme did not take place every year but rather once every two or three years, and sometimes even less frequently. The authorities, moreover, were not allowed to recruit the only son of a family. Indeed, in order that *devşirme* could take place, the inhabitants of a community had to give their collective consent. This condition, I suppose, was in part a reflection of a sort of tacit agreement to avoid conflict, in part an element of a social contract.

Some villages were so poor that they had lost all hope for the future. In places like the mountain villages of the Caucasus and of Shkodлr in Albania, it was very difficult to feed children and to provide work for them when they grew up, as there were simply no fields to be tilled, no animals to be grazed, and no tools. There was little opportunity either for the young to get married and move away. In such regions, families would practically wait for the devirme authorities to show up.

Villages were the preferred target of *devşirme* since it was easier to change the religions and languages of the boys there. It would be wrong, however, to emulate the author Ivo Andriç who, in his rather quaint and moving novel *The Bridge over the River Drina*, suggested that little boys about three or four years old were simply popped in a basket and carried off. Boys of this age were not recruited, because they could still come down with infantile diseases, and the state was not in a position to deal with illnesses such as measles and diphtheria. The state would recruit boys who had got over these diseases and who - to use the Persian term preferred by the clerks - were *gulamche*, corresponding to *garcon* or *Knabe*, in other

words boys of school-going age. Thus, a boy would have to be older than nine in order to be recruited. At the same time, boys above the age of fourteen or fifteen, referred to in the sources as 'sakall' (bearded), were rarely recruited. It was believed that they were too old to train, in analogy with Virgil's dictum 'As the twig is bent, the tree inclines.'

This said, in some cases, boys with a certain amount of experience as apprentices or assistant-workers were recruited into specific units of the army that demanded a high degree of specialisation, such as the *Hassa Mimarlar Ocağı* (Imperial Corps of Architects), which dealt with fortification and architecture, and the *Lağımcılar* (Corps of Sappers). Presumably, Mimar Sinan was one of these recruits. In this and similar cases, ethnicity was not a factor, and the Ottoman state never considered the ethnic background of those it recruited. To give a clear example, in Central Anatolia devşirme was carried out among the Karamanl community, who were ethnically Turkish but Christian by religion.

More often than not, young recruits were beyond the age when they could forget their identities; they were able to remember where they came from and who their mother, father and relatives were. One such example was the Bosnian Serb Mehmet Sokolovic. Many years after being recruited through *devşirme*, the now grand vizier Sokullu Mehmet Pasha used the very same system to find positions in the civil service for his entire family. He even appointed one relative as beylerbey (governor), while allowing another to become the Patriarch of the Serbs.

There is a nice story told from time to time: on a cold winter's day, a Southern Albanian woman gave a pair of worn-out shoes to her fellow countryman Ayas Mehmet. When he grew up and became the *sadrazam* (grand vizier) of Süleyman the Magnificent, he filled the shoes with gold and sent them back to the poor woman. As this anecdote suggests, everybody knew where they came from; on the other hand, the recruited boys did forget their language and religion.

After being recruited, boys were made to march, a reasonable measure, given that they were old enough to do so and were healthy. They were brought to certain centres where they were circumcised and sorted according to their qualities. The really bright and handsome ones were taken to the Enderun (literally, 'interior' or 'inner section', the elite boarding school for devirmes, since they would be trained to serve in the Palace. The eventual stage that they were expected to reach after this training was to 'ascend to the Birun (literally, 'exterior' or 'outer section'), which entailed them either becoming sanjakbeys or gaining a comparable position within the state hierarchy.

There was practically no other country on earth that could boast a ruling elite as impressive as that of the Ottoman state, since this elite was composed of physically impeccable and exceptionally bright statesmen, the crиme de la crиme of the races from which they stemmed. This is evident also from the accounts of voyagers. In all that sizable class there was not one diseased individual, because those that had risen to that level had been carefully selected and primed.

Contrary to a widespread belief, not every boy was taken away by force. As we have seen, some poor villages were very happy to have their young men recruited, believing that only this way could their sons survive and ascend to higher positions. Needless to say, some boys would become soldiers or janissaries and end up dying in war. Others, though, could go on to become a grand vizier and determine the destiny of a huge empire, as happened with Sokullu Mehmet Pasha and Mahmud Pasha, son of a Greek father and Serbian mother. Similarly, while one boy entering the Turkish Military Academy today might become the Chief of Staff (or even the President, as happened in the past), another will retire without even becoming a colonel. Likewise, not every young person who manages to get into the renowned School of Political Science in Ankara *(Mükiye)* is destined to become an ambassador, district governor or undersecretary; some will remain minor clerks in a provincial administration.

Like the *Mükiye*, Enderun was not a school as we know it, with classrooms and the like. Students there would receive in-service training and be promoted from one section to the next. If the work they did at the Palace met with approval, they would be entrusted with tasks that brought them closer to the Sultan. In Enderun, they received both verbal and face-to-face education in many subjects, such as sports, painting, literature and calligraphy.

Boys had the opportunity to learn as much about these subjects as their capacities allowed. This did not mean, however, that every child would become a highbrow. If a boy had not received enough education or had started his education at the rank of soldier, he could still be illiterate even when becoming a grand vizier, which was the case with Kemanke (archer) Kara Mustafa Pasha. However, there were also well-educated people among the Enderun graduates, such as the above-mentioned Mahmud Pasha and Sokullu Mehmet Pasha, and Caalzade Sinan Pasha. We also come across examples of writers like Lütfi Pasha. Grand vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha was not learned himself but his sons were eminent müderrises (medrese teachers) of their time.

Being a *devşirme* was a way of life. These boys learned Turkish, and even the ones not accepted into the Enderun were sent to

villages around Istanbul to live together with a Turkish family. It would evidently have taken a certain length of time before a child who had grown up speaking a Balkan language and in the culture associated with it would see the Ottoman language and culture as his own. The knowledge of Turkish and religion that a prospective janissary acquired was a crucial component of his education. These boys were not taught the sophisticated religiosity to which medrese students were exposed; the basic objective of their religious education was to equip them with the piety of an ordinary villager.

A language and civilisation is best acquired among ordinary people. For instance, if a teenager wants to learn French, he or she should - in my opinion - go off to the French countryside or stay with a peasant family and acquaint themselves with French culture in that way. Not everyone is capable of picking up a language over night while studying it at university. The sources inform us, by means of contrast, that the *devşirmes* gradually learned to sing songs and to chant the prayers that the people of that time would recite.

Not all *devşirmes* were ordinary country folk. Sometimes the authorities persuaded distinguished families to hand over their sons, a practice not at odds with Ottoman tradition. Even children of some Byzantine nobles, such as those from the Evrenosolu and Mihalolu families, joined the army during the final years of the Empire, as did members of the Byzantine dynasty, like Murat Pasha of the Paleologus dynasty and emsi Pasha of the sfandiyarolu dynasty.

In the aftermath of a war, the *ulema* and the very capable officials responsible for implementing *devşirme* would adopt the following strategy towards the families from which they intended to recruit, a strategy that was followed in the cases of Mahmud Pasha and Sokullu Mehmet Pasha. They would try and persuade the families, saying to them: 'Give us your child and he can become a Muslim, which will be good for you and good for us.' As a matter of fact, Sokullu Mehmet Pasha, who rose to such prominence within the Ottoman Empire, came from a very famous and educated clerical family. He would, though, go on to become a devout Muslim, which was the primary aim of the *devşirme* system.

It is crucial to understand precisely how this system of assimilation and education worked and how the *devşirmes* came to accept it. The Enderun was a self-contained institution with its own rules and practices, and we need to study its history very thoroughly. Pupils addressed one another as 'siz', the Turkish equivalent to the 'vous' form in French; there was no room for casualness. They had to be extremely respectful towards the officials in charge of their dormitories and to the dormitory-monitors. They also had to comply with a very strict regime that dictated when they would dine, wash,

wake up and go to sleep. Some refer to this regime with good reason as the Ottoman Court Etiquette *(Osmanlı Saray Medeniyeti)*. At this point, it is necessary to emphasise that spurious notions such as Enderun *oğlanı* ('pretty boy of the Enderun') have no basis in reality.

The case of the Enderun bears a remarkable likeness to the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) founded later on by Christians, during the Renaissance period. Both institutions applied strict rules to individuals. For example, Jesuits also addressed each other with the 'vous' form, and it was out of the question for youngsters within the sect to act in an informal manner. There was constant surveillance, both at night and during the day, which is exactly how the Enderun functioned. It was thanks to the discipline in the Enderun that it was possible to establish Ottoman court etiquette in no time at all. Of course, the Enderun also had a female counterpart, namely the Harem.

The girls in the Harem were not brought there purely for the benefit of the sultan. It is true that there were some girls who possessed certain qualities which destined them to be presented to, and admired by, the sultan. The rest, however, would stay and serve in the Harem. Most importantly, they would learn Turkish, Islam and court etiquette, some of them later going on to marry men who had been promoted from the Enderun to the Birun. For this reason, while it could not be claimed that the Ottoman Empire possessed a blood aristocracy or offered its upper echelons a distinct and superior legal status, Ottoman society resembled other societies of its time in that they all created an elite class through marriage. Members of this class ruled the empire together with the sultan as long as their physical and mental health allowed them to. The moment they lost the capacity to fulfil their responsibilities, they were excluded from this class. After all, they enjoyed no legal privileges whatsoever.

Devşirme started to decline in the seventeenth century. According to the information provided by the famous Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi, about 8,000 boys were recruited during the reign of Murat IV (1612-1640), while in the eighteenth century, during the reign of Ahmet III (1673-1736), the number decreased to almost 1,000. However, from the middle of the eighteenth century, Anatolian Turks like the future grand vizier *Damat* brahim Pasha of Nevehir were also included in this category. What is more, the division of the army based in the Topkapı Palace known as the *Zülüflü Baltacılar* (literally, 'sidelocked axemen') always included Turks. The men serving in this unit, like *Baltacı* Mehmet Pasha and Halil Hamit Pasha of sparta, as well as the Muslim *devşirme*s from the Caucasus, were stationed in the 'outer dormitory' of the Palace. From the eighteenth century on, however, this division effectively ceased to exist.

Devşirme was practised from the middle of the fifteenth century until the eighteenth century; that is, it was a tradition followed for a little more than two centuries out of a total imperial history of six centuries. During its lifetime, the Empire managed to overcome even greater problems using various methods, which need to be dealt with separately.

THE OTTOMAN FAMILY

What do we mean by 'the Ottoman family'? I could certainly have tackled this topic under the heading 'the family in Ottoman society' but have not done so for one reason: although we are dealing here with an empire - in reality, the last of the traditional empires - the various communities within this vast territory did share some common features, despite the fact that they adhered to various religions and spoke manifold languages. First and foremost among these features was the family.

The areas of settlement in the empire were extremely varied, from the desert of Arabia with its tribes, to the cities on the coast of the Balkans and the Adriatic, to a world capital like Istanbul. Given this heterogeneity, it is natural that people were at the mercy of very different social structures and that a wide range of social formations presented themselves. All the same, within this society there was great uniformity when it came to the family. So much so that, whether you went to the villages or towns on the banks of the River Danube, to the Euphrates Basin, to the coasts of the Caucasus or the Nejef Desert in today's Iraq, you would not find many differences with regards to people's conceptualisation of the family, of relationships within the family, and of the role played by the family in the life of the individual. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a person who knew a number of rules, laws and traditions would have at their disposal a model for how to behave, which tells us that a certain social standard had emerged.

When we say 'the Ottoman family', we do of course mean Christians and Jews as much as Muslims, whereby the latter group consists of both Sunnis and followers of other sects under the umbrella of Islam. In all these cases, the family was the basis of society. Let us look at the family from two perspectives: from the perspective of the state and from the perspective of society. For the state, the family was the fundamental unit, the unit of production, and thus the unit to be taxed. In the nineteenth century, it was the unit of *ahz-ı asker*, namely the principal unit from which soldiers were recruited. It was also the administrative unit through which the state could liaise with its subjects.

Marriages between Muslim subjects are said to have been

registered in the *şer'iyye sicili*, the court records. Clearly, though, not everyone would, or could, register their marriage in this way. The important thing was that people had to announce their marriages to their own religious community by means of a small ceremony carried out according to the norms of that community. (This was a tradition, not an actual obligation). After this, that couple would be known as husband and wife, and, together with any children that they may have and any elderly members of the older generation living in the house, they would constitute a family.

The Ottoman family had some rules of its own too. It was patriarchal, so the state registered only the father and sons as tax-payers, a practice that applied to other religions as much as it did to Muslims. The Ottoman family was consecrated through a religious procedure, a registration. For Muslims, it was a marriage ceremony performed by the imam, an essential tradition. For the Christian community, a religious marriage would take place, this would be noted in the church records, and the married couple would be recognised as a family. In this family, in case of death the estate would be divided according to religious rules. We do, however, encounter very interesting exceptions. When we look at the court registers, we see that in some cases non-Muslims applied for the estate to be divided in accordance with the inheritance rules of Islamic law, which are known as *ahkam-ı feraiz*. For instance, in Armenian families the estate of the deceased was allocated to daughters, sons and wives according to these rules. Why? Because the rules and ways of life of these two communities were evidently very similar, in that the dowry was given to the daughter and she was married off. The remaining sons were expected to have an equal share of the fields, garden and tools. In other words, similarities in lifestyle brought with them a certain standardisation in legal procedures and a comparable approach to the division of property.

There can be no doubt that, in this society, the most important element in the shaping of the family was the woman. A number of rather questionable theories have been proposed related to the status of the Ottoman Turkish woman. These misconceptions may have arisen from the inaccuracy or misinterpretation of Ottoman sources or simply be knee-jerk reactions. To be sure, women did have secondary status within the Ottoman family, and this was the case for Muslim Turks, Arabs, Armenians and Greeks. However, it is certainly wrong to lump together the lifestyle and position of women in distant Arabia with the conditions in Bosnia, on the banks of the Danube and in Central Anatolia.

The notion of 'the imprisoned woman' holds little water. In Ottoman society, the woman did get out of the house, and she also

appeared in public. Although there were exceptions and certain local sensitivities, women did generally go to bazaars, especially in Istanbul and smaller localities of the empire. Visits to tombs were so popular among women that they did not just go to Muslim tombs but also declared it their responsibility to celebrate in May the Virgin Mary's ascension to heaven. This is why, on the so-called day of Black Mary, when the Virgin Mary's ascension to heaven was commemorated, Christian and Muslim women could be seen together in the churches located within the city walls. One traveller who reported this was Salomon Schweigger, who commented on the status of Ottoman women in his travel book of the 16th century *Ein newe Reyβbeschreibung auβ Teutschland nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem* (A New Description of a Journey from Germany to Constantinople and Jerusalem). According to Schweigger, a Turkish man was not in a position to look after two wives. When a husband and wife were separated, the child, especially if it was a daughter, would be given to the woman. Schweigger also pointed out that women enjoyed freedom of movement. This is how one mediaeval writer personally saw the situation of Ottoman women, but it is striking that, in the eyes of this conservative German Protestant, the Ottoman woman enjoyed freedom within this society.

The Ottoman family is said to have exemplified the 'community type of family', in other words, to have been an extended family. But this is a slightly erroneous sociological misrepresentation. It is widely presumed that, in an agricultural society, the model of the extended family would prevail. However, this was not the case. Especially in the nineteenth century, in cities like Istanbul, the predominant model was the nuclear family, consisting of the mother, the father and the children.

Having said this, although the nuclear family prevailed in the Ottoman Empire, it was the neighbourhood that played the crucial role. The neighbourhood was the foundation for the Ottoman family. This worked in various ways. A family could only settle in a neighbourhood with the permission of other neighbours. Thus, other neighbours enjoyed the right to keep an eye on this family, to warn the family should they display any improper conduct, and even to expel them from the neighbourhood. And the latter did happen. At the end of the sixteenth century, the first ambassador of England to the Ottoman Empire, Edward Barton, who was sent by Queen Elizabeth, was living in the Istanbul neighbourhood of Tophane. As he was rather partial to the good life, he would organise extremely noisy soirйes, at which alcohol was served. The people from the neighbourhood came together, submitted a petition and managed to expel the ambassador. This happened prior to the Treaty of

Westphalia (1648), so diplomatic immunities and exemptions did not yet exist, but it is still striking that the person being expelled from the neighbourhood was an ambassador of a queen. The same thing was also done to some foreign tradesmen. All in all, the peace and harmony of the neighbourhood were very significant.

This shows us, moreover, that such a thing as uniformity and harmony in life style and culture is possible. In many areas, people living in wooden houses tried not to quarrel loudly, because it was important for them that the neighbours should not hear. Simply put, people lived in a neighbourhood in order to be together with others, and this was a very significant feature of Ottoman life.

The second (and more important) feature is that the neighbourhood, encompassing individual families, had a legal status in itself. For instance, extraordinary taxes levied at exceptional times, which we call *avarz-ı divaniye*, were charged to multiple households. That is to say, there existed a fiscal unit, called the *avarız hanesi*, made up of several houses. For this reason, it was essential to live in a neighbourhood.

The third feature is that people from a neighbourhood took on responsibilities for common facilities such as the fountain, drainage, and precautions against fire. (In reality, not so many precautions were taken, although they should have been.) Especially when there was a malaise in public safety, people from a neighbourhood took responsibility for policing the neighbourhood themselves. This was a very important feature of the neighbourhood, and although it had no legal basis, as a tradition it carried even more weight. Rich and poor lived together in a neighbourhood, because a neighbourhood was a unit which came into being not on the basis of economic conditions but on the basis of shared religion and religious belonging; in this unit, the rich protected the poor as much as was possible.

A child would be born into a neighbourhood. As soon as he/she was born, it was the people from the neighbourhood who came to convey their best wishes, and it was they who helped the new mother if her family members did not suffice. The child grew up and went to the local school. If a child did not attend the local religious educational institution, whether that be the Muslim local school or the Jewish *beit midrash*, the family would certainly meet with the criticism of their religious community. Conversely, the religious community would congratulate successful students.

A marriage in a neighbourhood was the business of the respective religious community. There were certainly people to take care of the funeral arrangements of a deceased person. Nobody would be left to their own resorts when they were ill, and everyone would be

able to find support and assistance. As a consequence, the neighbourhood interfered in the life of residents. The concept of 'What will the neighbours say?' was a crucial communal institution, and it was valid in its own right. So much so that, during the reign of Abdülhamit II (1842-1918), until an actual vice squad was organized, the people of a neighbourhood would exert pressure on groups living in a supposedly disorderly way. Remnants of such a culture have survived down to the present. Today, however, because of economic conditions, the shift to living in apartments and the changes in our way of life, we are demolishing and abolishing the institution called 'the neighbourhood'. Even people living in the same apartment have little notion of, or desire for, living together.

In actual fact, the Ottoman family underwent a very considerable evolution. 'Family' and 'evolution' may seem to be contradictory concepts, in that the family is something which cannot be fully understood and defined within the historical process. But although it is both the most influential and most conservative institution within human society, even this institution experienced changes.

Members of the traditional Ottoman family lived together with their relatives and their neighbours. And it was within this framework that the family dealt with economic activities and challenges and family members supported one another. In the nineteenth century, though, as a result of the growth of big cities and the increasingly salient phenomenon of immigration, this system began to crumble. All the same, it should be pointed out that, in contrast to European countries, Turkey, like all Middle Eastern societies, remains one of the most conservative societies with respect to the family. When social and economic institutions fail, or are unable to develop, the family comes to play a critical role. Indeed, in today's Turkey, with its recurrent economic crises, it is clearly detrimental for many families that they no longer have three generations living together. In such a multi-generational household faced with economic crisis, the children will be looked after well and educated, and the members of the family will be able to cope with the high cost of living by eating from a common pot. Unfortunately, we are gradually rendering such solutions impossible by allowing differences in world-views to evolve into polarization between family members. However, in economic terms, the Turkish middle-class is still not in a position to establish and uphold the small nuclear family. All of us are aware of this.

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In a sense, the family was the actual school in Ottoman society, since it was there that children were raised, courtesy of the

third generation. When we look at the land tax records, we can see that the primary tax payers were the male members of a family and that any land which could be ploughed and cultivated by means of a pair of oxen was allocated to these male members. The family (which included close relatives) was basically a unit of production, and this applied to urban dwellers too. Craftsmen in the bazaar would give apprenticeship positions to their close relatives and to people from their hometowns with whom they were acquainted. Thus, in a way, in older societies like Ottoman society, crafts were not points of convergence where people gathered by chance. The more people hired close relatives as apprentices and assistants, the more fields of craft came to take on an ethnic character. For instance, Armenians were jewellers, Greeks were carpenters, and Syriacs were stonemasons and silversmiths.

It is very interesting to note that Turks did what they did well, whether that be as glassblowers or stained-glass makers. This is evident from the records held in the Süleymaniye Library. People learned how to eat within the family, and it took a long time before Turkish cuisine, and the cuisines of other peoples within the Ottoman Empire, appeared on the market, that is, were served in restaurants. This is also the case today. Despite the fact that there are almost 70,000 Armenians living in Turkey, is there any commercial venue, any restaurant, where Turks can get a taste of genuine Armenian cooking? This cuisine, like Ottoman cuisine in general, is still produced inside the home, and perhaps this is the most significant difference between Turkey and Western European societies.

The family was the setting in which the cultures and folklores of particular sectors of society manifested themselves. In Ottoman society, members of all the religious communities were brought up with ogres, fairies and fairy tales, and these legends bore striking resemblances to each other. The responsibility for this, however, lay neither with the press nor with the school, but with the family, within which elements of folklore would be passed down from the elderly to the young, from grandmothers to grandchildren and so on.

We should not forget too that, in the event of crises, the family was the main shelter. The Ottoman family, conservative and protective, has endured up to the present. Unemployment is not a pleasant phenomenon; however, we must admit that if unemployment has not become as much a horror and disaster in Turkey as it has in the rich West European societies, the reason for this is to a large degree the family institution and the protective role of the family.

The Ottoman family started to change in the period of governmental and administrative reform known as the *Tanzimat*

(1839-1876). This change comprised not just a drift towards the nuclear family but also the transformation of economic statuses within the family. Gradually, women started to participate in social life, gained education and became teachers, and thereafter contributed to other spheres of public life. From this point on, family members would earn a living in this way, but as a result of this frictions and schisms emerged between the nuclear family and the members of those generations who did not belong to the nucleus, and family issues became a matter for the law. In order to make marriage easier and less of a financial burden, new laws such as the *Men-I İsrafat Kanunu* (Law on Forbidding Extravagance) were introduced. These prohibited overspending on wedding ceremonies, first proscribing a reduction in the dowry and bride price (the money paid by the parents of a boy for the right to marry a girl) and then abolishing these payments altogether. A population registry administration was finally established, and all family members were registered. The family was also officially recognised as the principal legal unit in society. Despite the abolition of the progressive Decree on Family Law *(Hukuk-ı Aile Kararnamesi)* in 1919, Turkish law was increasingly brought into line with the norms of Roman law, a process of legal westernisation that reached its apex with the adoption of the Civil Code in 1926. Since then, the individual and the family have been the primary legal persons for the purposes of this law.

For the Ottoman family, divorce was one of the gravest legal procedures. According to Islamic law and Ottoman practice, a woman who wanted to get divorced had to be able to prove force majeure, a condition still contained within today's civil code. Persistent drunkenness was one such justification for divorce. A husband, for instance, might promise not to drink too much and declare 'If I drink too much, we will get divorced' and that, in the case of him drinking, the marriage would be annulled from the point of view of Islam. After this, if he drank too much, his wife would have the right to file for divorce. Divorce was also decreed to be legitimate when a husband was persistently absent or his whereabouts unknown. (This measure was a response to cases of unacceptable aberration.) Apart from this, if a woman claimed that she and her husband were hopelessly incompatible, and her husband agreed, it would render their divorce immediately valid. In other words, people did get divorced in the Ottoman Empire, and women had the right to file for divorce too. It is well-known that the daughters of sultans or of their sons (*şehzades*) could make use of the so-called 'virtue right' (*ismet hakkı*), which entitled them to divorce their husbands. As is the case in all traditional societies, divorce was not looked upon favourably in all circumstances. We should not think that, just because a specific rule

and the law as a whole made divorce look easy, a man could go and get divorced at the drop of a hat. Divorce was much more difficult than it is now because a man was asked 'why?' And that 'why?' forced him to act carefully. Sometimes it meant that men had to go on living together with women to whom they were totally unsuited.

A child was placed under the guardianship of their parents. If there were no parents, then a guardian was appointed for the child, though sometimes the court undertook this duty. Let us not forget that, in that period too, there were children left out on the streets. They were handed over to a woman, who would look after them in return for a certain salary. That is to say, a safeguard emerged to deal with such situations. But in today's Turkey, there are still thousands of orphaned children living out on the streets; in my opinion, it is shameful that Turks as a society do not fulfil their duty towards these young people but instead just get on with their lives.

In the nineteenth century, non-Muslim communities in particular experienced considerable growth, owing to the orphanages and charitable foundations that they set up, and there is no doubt that some of these foundations dealt specifically with children and families. Although Muslims and Christians did not hesitate to act generously in establishing the necessary charitable foundations, we should not forget that Ottoman society was on the whole rather modest.

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What also happened in the nineteenth century was that the education and development of the family, and especially the education of women and girls, became social conventions, even missions of a kind. So much so that people would model themselves on the families they encountered in the grammar books of the West, such as Mr and Mrs Brown or Madame and Monsieur Duvalle. That is to say, they would hanker after well-lit and well-heated houses in which two children lived with their mother, father and very old grandparents, and where people would read books and do embroidery when evening came. This was the image of 'the family' that was presented in school books, and it led people to disdain their own family milieus, the damp and dirty wooden houses in Aksaray in old Istanbul where women would gather, and where men would get bored of sitting and dash off to the local coffee house. It was the ideology communicated in such textbooks that quickly transformed the extended family type, namely the family in which three generations lived together, into the nuclear family. Unfortunately, though, the economic realities of modern Turkey have meant that the transformation has not been altogether successful.

The so-called 'Ottoman family', which consisted of two or

three generations living together, which attached great value to relationships between family members, and which was firmly rooted in the local neighbourhood, is certainly worthy of our attention. It was a model that prevailed throughout the Ottoman world, and that is why we call it the 'Ottoman family'. This model was tied up with distinct forms of communication and address that could be heard on the street too. People in Turkey, regardless of their religion, address older women as 'teyze' (aunt), older men as 'amca' (uncle) and those younger than them as 'kardeim'. It has been observed, moreover, that people who emigrated from the Ottoman Empire took such traditions with them even as far as America. It was inconceivable for people like these that the inhabitants of a neighbourhood would not establish close relationships with one another; the fact that this often seems to be the case is one of the things about which Turkish emigrants to Europe and America, irrespective of their language or religion, complain bitterly.

The family is widely regarded as a conservative institution, and rightly so. It does not have much to do with political regimes, but continues in the way it knows best. This is not to say that economic developments during the last century have had minimal impact on the family; the opposite is certainly true. All the same, if people do continue to look back with nostalgia, then we have to ask ourselves whether we are doing the right thing to continue along the same path we have been following. Social engineering and the family are incompatible, a statement that the events of the past have vindicated.

BAB-I ALI

The phrase *Bab-ı ali* (the Sublime Porte) was once familiar to Turkish people as the name of the area of Istanbul where the newspapers had their offices. However, ever since the press moved to the outskirts of the city, such as the suburb of kitelli, *Bab-ı ali* has been heard less often, and these days it is never used as a synonym for the news media.

Whereas people of my generation grew up believing that *Bab-ı ali* was the name of a district that lent its name to the Turkish press, in the world of the nineteenth century it would have been understood immediately as meaning the Ottoman state and government. The various translations of it, such as Sublime Porte, *Hohepforte* and *Verhovniy Dvor*, carried the same connotation. From diplomatic reports and correspondence, we can see that the Ottoman state and government were identified with this term, with expressions such as 'Bab- ʙli is demanding this', 'Bab- ʙli is acting in that way', 'Bab- ʙli is hesitant' cropping up frequently.

In earlier times, the phrase simply meant government.

Indeed, during the Safavid (1501/1502-1722) and Qajar (1794-1925) eras in Iran, governmental buildings in Isfahan and Qazvin, which were controlled by Turkish dynasties, were called Ali Kapı ('high gate'), a corrupted form of Bab-ı ali. In fact, the term used in Iran is rather more Turkish in origin than that used by the Ottomans; however, it is disputable whether the institution of the government in Iran was as firmly established as that in the Ottoman Empire.

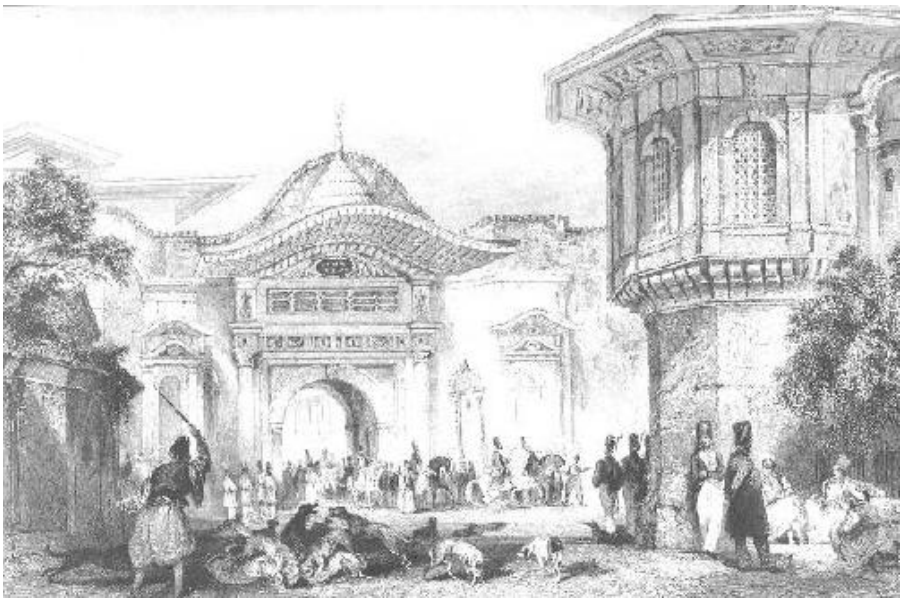
Today we can still see the physical *Bab-ı ali* of old, an immense gate, when we are walking from Sirkeci in the direction of the Gülhane Park. It is located opposite the Alay Palace and the former State Security Court. The gate, thankfully, is still wooden. Right behind it is a garden that contains the Directorate of Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry, a building designed by the Fossati brothers from the Brera Academy in Milan. The remarkable archive suffered a huge fire in 1911, in the course of which a large number of historical documents were reduced to ashes. It was threatened by another fire a few years ago, when the nearby Financial Directorate went up in flames.

In fact, *Bab-ı ali* is used to fires[1]0. It survived several of them in the eighteenth century. In 1808, armed with just a gun, grand vizier Alemdar Mustafa Pasha defended himself and his concubine from the Harem against the janissaries who had attacked his mansion. Afterwards, he set fire to the arsenal and blew up the mansion, along with several hundred janissaries. (Such instances of political hara-kiri are occasionally encountered in the Turkish political tradition.) After this incident, the gate and the grand vizier's mansion were reconstructed, but the *Tanzimat* era marked the end for the wooden Bab- ʙli. The building made of stone and brick that today serves as the office of the governor of Istanbul, having previously been the office of the grand vizier, was completed in 1844.

In Ottoman times, *Bab-ı ali* was the area where students keen to work for the state were trained. This is why phrases like *Bab-ı ali efendisi* (gentleman of *Bab-ı ali*) and *Bab-ı ali ketebesi* (clerk of *Bab-ı ali*) denoted members of the class of young civil servants who were eager to occupy leading positions in the state administration. Meanwhile, other expressions with both positive and negative associations entered the Turkish language, among them *Bab-ı ali zihniyeti* (*Bab-ı ali* mentality), *Bab-ı ali ikiyüzlülüğü* (*Bab-ı ali* hypocrisy), *Bab-ı ali efendiliği* (*Bab-ı ali* courtesy) and *Bab-ı ali tavrı* (*Bab-ı ali* attitude).

The empire manifested itself in very concrete forms in the area of *Bab-ı ali* although, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, such buildings were actually few in number. The Topkapı Palace (literally, 'Cannongate Palace'), also known as *Saray-ı Amire*

(literally, 'Palace of the Superior') was the private residence of the sultan, but it was surrounded by a handful of buildings that had additional functions. The Harem was the first part of the complex, as it was the actual home of the sultan.



It is worthwhile asking whether the Enderun and other sections of the imperial Palace actually enjoyed any kind of legal status as institutions. The room known as *Kubbealtı* ('Under the Dome') might appear to have been a place where leading figures merely discussed state affairs, but this location - also called the *Divan-ı Hümayun* (Imperial Council)—was one of the most influential and enduring institutions of the Ottoman Empire. Let us dwell on it for a while.

Among the members of the Imperial Council were the grand vizier and the *kazaskers*[1]*1* (chief military judges) of Anatolia and Rumelia (roughly the territory of Thrace in today's Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria). From the sixteenth century onwards, the *Sheikh ul-Islam* was not a regular member of the Council and did not participate in its meetings, despite the fact that he was officially the head of the *ulema*. The first, second, third and fourth viziers would of course be present at Council meetings, as would the *Kaptan-ı Derya* (Admiral of the Fleet) and the *Yeniçeri Ağası* (Agha of the Janissaries). The so-called *nişancı* (today meaning 'marksman') was not just the secretary of the Imperial Council but also the man ultimately responsible for keeping records of property-deeds and dealing with the foreign and domestic

correspondence of the state. These, then, were the members of the Imperial Council, where critical issues were discussed.

Once a week, namely on Friday afternoon, the Council would listen to appeals concerning cases that had been processed elsewhere. Sometimes the case had reached an impasse; in other situations, an individual would be seeking redress for what they regarded as an unfair sentence. Whatever the reason, the Council would deal with appeal applications there and then.

The Imperial Council was an administrative institution that represented the Empire. Near the chamber in which the Council assembled were offices where the clerical staff worked. Thus it is clear that the Topkapı Palace was not simply the residence of the sultan; it also had other crucial functions. The residence and office of the grand vizier, in other words *Bab-ı ali*, occupied the same location from the seventeenth century onwards, and it needs to be emphasized that the home of the *sadrazam* was not just the place where this man lived but also an office that employed both members of the public and certain state officials.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the chief officials of the Ottoman state, including the grand vizier, had a certain number of servants, known as *kapı halkı* ('commoners of the Porte'), whom they paid from their own budgets. They provided such great assistance to the grand vizier that, besides doing housework, some of them even used to help him with state affairs. On the other hand, not every employee in *Bab-ı ali* would be paid from the funds of the grand vizier.

In Ottoman times, *Bab-ı ali* was a much larger building than the one we see today and housed an extraordinary number of state offices, including the Treasury. In those days, while there was no 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs', there were officials who took care of foreign affairs and they were based in *Bab-ı ali*. They were supervised by the *Reis-ül küttab* (chief of clerks), who came to be regarded as an expert in foreign diplomacy. The value of such experts came to the fore when the Empire was involved in negotiations on the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699). This agreement, in which the Ottomans ceded substantial territories to the Habsburg Monarchy and other minor powers, certainly had negative consequences for the Empire, but it nonetheless paved the way for some crucial developments.

Another significant building was the *Ağa Kapısı* (Gate of the Agha)[1]2, the residence of the head of the Corps of Janissaries stationed in the vicinity of the Süleymaniye Mosque. After 1826 it served as the office of the *Sheikh ul-Islam*, thereafter being referred to as *Meşihatü'l-İslamiyye or Bab-ı Meşihat*, both of which mean 'the office of Sheikh ul-Islam'. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the building started to be used as the office of the Mufti, the provincial

director of religious affairs.

Today the building is home to a very important and magnificent archive, namely the records of the Islamic court. The documents are actually still stored in cupboards made by Sultan Abdülhamit Khan II (1848-1918), the thirty-fourth sultan of the empire, who is known to have been a very competent carpenter. In these documents one can find copious information about the social, cultural and legal history of the empire and its major cities. Indeed, the archive is so huge that it would be impossible to analyse and interpret all of the material in it. Let us hope that facsimiles of the documents can be produced as soon as possible, so that they can be protected from wear and tear at the hands of researchers. In this way, historians of the Ottoman Empire not only in Istanbul but also throughout the world would have the chance to work on them.

Another state office was that of the Admiral of the Fleet. Located in the district of Kasımpaşa, quite far from Topkapı, it was gradually turned into the Admiralty (Bahriye Nezareti) and is today called the *Donanma Saha Komutanlığı,* the Office of the Admiral of the Northern Fleet. The admiral, who lives in this building, is in charge of naval operations in the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus. Interestingly, the *Sheikh ul-Islam* had no official residence, and the place where he resided was also declared to be his workplace. As we have seen, through the above-mentioned buildings the Ottoman state made its existence felt; phrases such as *Bab-ı ali* and *devlet kapısı* (Porte of the state), moreover, were gradually applied in the provinces as well. Thus, a provincial court or office of a *kaymakam* (the governor of a provincial district) would often be termed a *devlet kapısı* or *kale* (literally, 'fortress'). For instance, since time immemorial the local government office in Safranbolu in the Black Sea region has been called the 'Kale'. Unfortunately, this impressive building perched on a hill was damaged in a fire and is now being restored. What it will be used for in the future I do not know[1]3.

When you exit *Bab-ı ali* and walk uphill, you will come across what was first the Ministry of Finance and later the revenue office. This building too suffered a fire, after which it underwent repairs and was handed over to the Istanbul police. Behind it there is a state archive, but the capacity of the building housing this archive is insufficient and no new building for it is being prepared. It would appear that Istanbul and Turkey are incapable of preserving the heritage of an Empire that lasted six centuries, unable to maintain its archive. In the past, powerful countries like the Ottoman Empire kept archives related to foreign affairs. In legal terms, these were major countries and they would exchange ambassadors, which was not the case with smaller countries. Only major states like England, Austria-

Hungary, Russia, France, the Ottoman Empire, Germany, Italy and Spain could afford to do this, and the ambassadors they appointed were granted vast authority.

The embassies of these countries ought to have been located at *Bab-ı ali*; however, for some reason or other, ever since the Byzantine period foreign countries have preferred to site them on the other side of the Golden Horn, and this is why all the European embassies are today located in Beyolu. The only country to have a mission in *Bab-ı ali* is Iran, which has its Consulate General there. With regards to this building, I would like to clear up a mistake sometimes found in publications and note that the mission was built by the Fossati Brothers, rather than by the well-known Armenian Balyan Family.

In more recent history, *Bab-ı ali* witnessed a number of major incidents. In 1947, there was the so-called Tan incident, which involved supporters of the government attacking the premises of the newspaper Tan, the owners of which were known to be communists. In the notorious *Bab-ı ali* Coup of 1913, Enver Pasha and Talat Bey (later to be Talat Pasha) executed their plan to rush into the cabinet during a meeting and kill the Minister of War. It was a bloody coup, the like of which had never been seen. When you look at old postcards of the official residence of the *sadrazam*, you will notice his car, specially protected with machine guns.

Caalolu, located close to *Bab-ı ali*, is a very interesting neighbourhood, in which various aspects of Ottoman history and culture present themselves. The name of the neighbourhood derives from Caalzade Sinan Pasha, whom we encountered briefly in the chapter on devirme. As is the case with many *devşirme* pashas, there are various rumours about him. If we are to believe Joseph Hammer, he was of Italian descent, a descendant of one Count Cigalo, and was taken captive by the Ottoman navy. Yet, what is more important is that his mother was from the Ottoman palace and had married Count Cigalo after she herself had been taken captive, in this case by the Italian navy. This is why she raised her son in line with Turkish-Islamic morals, making his eventual conversion a good deal easier. Later on, Caalzade would become one of the most outstanding commanders and statesmen of the empire.

Since his mansion was located in that area of Istanbul, where he also set up a number of foundations, the neighbourhood was named after him. Caalolu is famous for its schools, photocopy shops, stationeries and printing houses and continues to be a vital component in the life of the city. Located in the Ticarethane Street, albeit in an unattractive building, are the State Archives of the Prime Ministry.

In the same street we find the *İçtihad Evi*. The name of the

house, which means ‘Opinion‘ or ‘Interpretation’, is written in line with French spelling rules as ‘Idjtihad’, a form incompatible with modern Turkish orthography. This is the building in which the Ottoman-Turkish intellectual Abdullah Cevdet produced his famous magazine *İçtihad*, a publication that was read in far greater numbers than it was printed, since it was passed around by readers. As the late Turkish writer and philosopher Cemil Meriç put it, this magazine represented a modernist Islamic view. It boldly asserted that every aspect of modern life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was in line with Islamic rules, and that is why it so enraged the fanatics. It is said that, at one time, the police had no alternative but to set up cannons in front of the building in order to guard it.

Next to Ticarethane Street is Çatalçeme Street, a little square which tells us a great deal about Ottoman history between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. At the corner of the square and Incili Çavu Street is the Molla Fenari Masjid (small mosque). The area also contains a number of famous schools such as the Rüstem Mektebi and the Caalolu Girls’ School, one of the first vocational high schools. At one time, the latter building housed the School of Political Science (*Mülkiye Mektebi*). Today there are numerous bookstores and photocopy shops in the area, which are especially used by those working in the State Archives. To sum up, we can say that Caaolu is a crucial element in the press and cultural life of today’s Istanbul; when it comes to the physical condition of the district, though, it is less easy to be so positive and optimistic.

THE BAROQUE IN ISTANBUL

In the eighteenth century, a remarkable number of cities managed to prosper through trade, the Ottoman capital being one of them. Among the others were Sarajevo, Plovdiv in Bulgaria, Moskopol in Macedonia, Trabzon on the Black Sea coast of Turkey, Haifa in today’s Israel, and Aleppo and Damascus in Syria. All of these Ottoman cities began to take on something of the atmosphere of Istanbul, and in later years a number of cities like Thessaloniki, Beirut and Izmir would develop into fully-fledged metropoli, like Istanbul itself. Having said this, as early as the sixteenth century a certain standardization in the architecture of the empire got underway, and this applied not only to public buildings such as mosques, *imarets* (the establishments where food was offered to the poor), caravanserais and bridges, but also to private residences. To give an example, tradesmen everywhere started to decorate the walls of their homes with works of embroidery produced in a certain style, with scenes from Istanbul being common motifs. In the eighteenth century, interestingly enough, a distinct style emerged in Ottoman public architecture, that is, in the

architecture of mosques, fountains, and so on, a style resembling that of the European Baroque. This is why, when discussing that period, art historians use the term 'the Ottoman Baroque'.

Let us dwell briefly on the Baroque itself. For one thing, contrary to what many people think, this style was not limited to architecture. As we all know, European art historians divide the arts into two categories: Apollonian and Dionysian. Architecture, painting and sculpture, at which the mythological god Apollo is said to have excelled, constitute the Apollonian arts, whereas theatre and music in particular make up the Dionysian arts. The Baroque is not regarded as being solely Apollonian in nature; that is, it was not just a tendency in architecture or painting. It also had Dionysian dimensions; indeed, 'Baroque music' is a familiar concept and has in fact been defined more precisely than Baroque architecture. More interesting still, people even refer to Baroque thought and literature. The eighteenth-century picaresque novel pioneered by Alain-Renй Lesage, for instance, was a genre heavily influenced by the Baroque era and its style. It is not easy to see what this information about the Baroque has to do with the Ottoman world of the eighteenth century; all the same, within the Ottoman sphere, changes related to the Baroque did occur and these can and should not be ignored.

How did the Empire come to be so influenced by the European Baroque? To be sure, this influence did not extend to literature and philosophy, but there is significant evidence of it in other arts. In the Ottoman painting of this time, we see an unusual feature, namely the use of perspective. Turkish art historians have shown that perspective had already been used in traditional folk art, known as Bektai painting. This, in turn, has been traced back to a development in Iranian painting from the sixteenth century onwards, which influenced the art of Azerbaijan and neighbouring areas. In Iranian works, we find both the use of perspective and the attempt to produce panoramas, with excellent examples being numerous war scenes, including depictions of the Safavid-Ottoman wars, as well as visual representations of wrestling bouts. The latter include pictures of the Iranian hero Rostam, son of Z l, who features in the Iranian epic *Shahnameh*, in addition to portraits of the Turkish Zal Mahmud Pasha. Such paintings still adorn the walls of palaces and mansions.

It is thought that Iranian painting influenced Ottoman artists, particularly in Istanbul, in the eighteenth century. Therefore, the changes in Ottoman painting should not be traced back to the West alone; Iran may have been more influential. Already in the late seventeenth century, Ottoman court-painter Abdulcelil Levni, a master of the art of miniature, had abandoned the old Ottoman miniature tradition and imbued his portraits and the humans in his pictures with

much greater motion than had been done before. We should not forget either the paintings of one Vasf, who mastered the art of miniature while attending the Enderun; his paintings also exemplify the effective use of perspective.

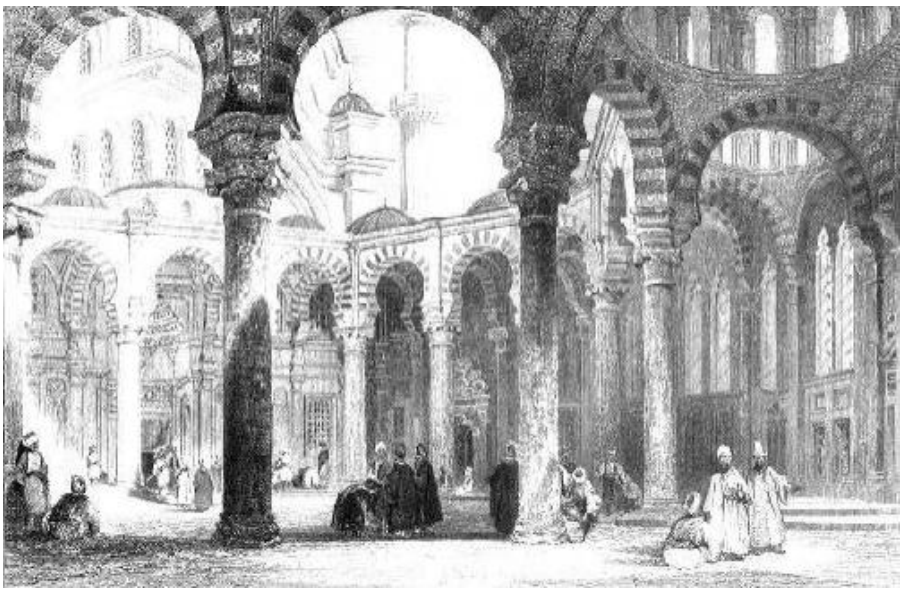
Certainly, the impact of the Baroque was most felt in the field of architecture. In Europe, Baroque architecture served two functions. First of all, it enabled the state to make its presence felt and to represent itself in the eyes of the masses. The façades of Baroque buildings, with their long and wide monumental staircases, caught the eye, not least because of their elaborate ornamentation. Thus the state managed to make its presence felt through buildings which were magnificent yet at the same time friendly. And these buildings really did meet with the approval of the masses. In architecture, as in other visual arts, the melancholic and barbed style of the Middle Ages, which seems to have inspired nothing but anguish in people, gave way to something much more lively and cheerful.

What kind of impact could this shift have on the architecture of the Ottoman Empire, which looked so very different from the architecture of mediaeval Europe in that it was extremely geometrical and based on the harmony of buildings with their environment? Paintings of the Baroque era are certainly in evidence in the Harem and in pavilions belonging to other sections of the Topkapı Palace. Whether or not these works are outstanding is up for debate, but it is clear that Ottoman society was in search of innovation, a fundamental desire of every society. Today we can see similar works in the palaces of the Druze emirs in Mount Lebanon, in Muhtara and Beiteddin. And the changes that there were shaping the visual art and handicrafts of Istanbul were also being exported to the provinces.

They could be observed in private residences in Plovdiv and Gobrovo in today's Bulgaria, in similar locations in Bosnia and Moskopol in the Balkans, on the Greek Islands, and in the Peloponnese, particularly in Nauplia. In addition, such trends were also widespread in the houses of the rich Aegean region, especially in the mansions of Izmir, Aydın, Tire and Birgi. Some large houses in Trabzon and in the sanjaks attached to it, such as Giresun, exhibited the new artistic tendency, as did homes in Syria and in Acre in Israel.

In those times, people liked paintings, especially colourful ones, while they also wanted to see images of Istanbul on the walls and ceilings of their homes. In earlier Ottoman architecture, structures had often been adorned with foliage, and the Ottoman Baroque drew on this to develop a dominant style of façade architecture, based on plain motifs and lines. You can see this style in the Nur-u Osmaniye Mosque and (in very exaggerated form) in the Nusretiye Mosque in Topkapıı, as well as on various fountains in Istanbul.

Let us consider, for example, the monumental fountain constructed by Ishak Agha in 1746 in Beykoz, a district on the Anatolian coast of the Bosphorus. How masterfully the architect managed to create visual harmony between the fountain and its rich water source! People of my generation will remember that this water, which was distributed in demijohns, was so plentiful that the fountain could supply all the districts along the Bosphorus.



In fact, a Baroque atmosphere pervades Beykoz. Its so-called 'baroque industry' - such a concept did exist - centred on the production of porcelain. The Sümerbank textile factory, the buildings where the leather products and glassware of Beykoz were exhibited, and the summer-house of Sultan Mahmud I (1696-1754) were what helped to win Beykoz the status of Baroque capital of the Bosphorus. Built in the Baroque style, the barracks in Selimiye, commissioned by Sultan Selim III (1761-1808), is not just the supreme Ottoman example of a Baroque barracks but the best example anywhere in Europe. At the time it was built - the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries - the Ottoman Empire, like countries across Europe, was forever being drawn into wars, and this barracks offered the soldiers there some degree of respite.

The residences of viziers and pashas built during the Baroque era were even more splendid than those that preceded them. This is why the best examples we have of such buildings, whether in Istanbul or the provinces, belong to this period. Indeed, examples of private architecture from the pre-Baroque era are few and far-

between. Perhaps this was because the Turks were at war for much of that time and eager to produce showy public buildings. Another, more subjective, perspective was offered in the sixteenth century by Salomon Schweigger, who stated that 'They [the Ottomans] only build huge temples in order to deceive Allah'. This, of course, is one individual's view of religiosity, and people in the seventeenth century were religious. They liked to create ostentatious public buildings, but when it came to the private sphere they were more modest, perhaps indeed too modest. This changed in the eighteenth century and people modified their lives in line with their incomes, leading of course to changes in lifestyle. For instance, certain forms of entertainment came into being in various neighbourhoods of Istanbul, such as Kağıthane and Göksu. In contrast to what some people think, these activities were not the preserve of viziers and pashas, as they also involved members of guilds. This did not mean, though, that they were crude forms of entertainment.

It is evident that some forms of folk art, such as the Punch-and-Judy-like Karagöz and the *ortaoyunu* theatrical genre caught on at these gatherings. The amusements at Kathane appealed to many Turks, while meeting with criticism among conservative and impoverished circles. That is why the summer-palaces which hosted these activities were demolished during the occasional revolt and at the onset of industrialisation, that is, when factories producing paper, copper dishes and iron were set up. To put it bluntly, these entertainments were regarded as superfluous.

It was not just the rebels led by one Patrona Halil who deemed the replacement of such residences and summer-houses with industrial facilities to be beneficial; the state did too. And this is how the delightful mansions (complete with boathouses), water houses and (further inland) summer-houses in the areas of Kathane, Feshane and Tersane along the Golden Horn disappeared, to be replaced by facilities like *lengerhanes* (factories manufacturing copper dishes), some of which are in ruins, some of which still in operation.

But these were not only the manifestations of the Baroque lifestyle, as we see from the delightful folk tales told by Istanbulites. It would be wrong to think that the literature of that period consisted purely of the joyful musical work of the poet Nedim, which is marked by its elegant Turkish. The deep mysticism of Sheikh Galib also belonged to that period, adding another strand to the culture of the Baroque era. Finally, we should not forget stories such as 'Tayyarzade' and 'Hançerli Hanm' (The Lady with a Dagger) that even contain dalliance, a certain degree of debauchery, and some motifs quite alien to the traditional virtuous lifestyle. All these were elements of the popular culture of Baroque Istanbul and constitute a pillar of the

civilization of this city.

It should be remembered that the period in question was also known as *Lale Devri*, the Tulip Era, when all people, be they rich or poor, from the most erudite member of the Islamic intelligentsia to the local butcher, would plant and grow tulips, as well as generating new species of tulip. The tulip really became a craze in the Istanbul of that time. There can hardly be clearer proof of this than the astonishing book *Tezkire-i şükufeciyan*, which includes biographies of tulip growers. While reading this work, one can really sense that Turkish society adopted a different style in the eighteenth century. In our history classes at school we were taught that the Tulip Era was one of excess and triviality, and it was even practically blamed for having precipitated a bloody and mindless rebellion. I would argue, however, that it was a vogue that our civilisation needed to pass through in order to open itself up and develop.

Ahmet Refik, an outstanding historian renowned for his popular works, who did a great deal to boost public interest in history, made an appropriate choice when he anointed this period 'the Tulip Era'. The importance of this era has been acknowledged by both Ottoman and Turkish societies. And, contrary to some claims, the great shift in style which we know the Tulip Era to have been did not leave its mark on Istanbul alone but also influenced remote areas of far-off provinces.

Europe was flooding into Turkey in the shape of clothes, textiles and glass, but at the same time similar things were being

transferred from here to Europe. It is generally thought that, in the period under examination, we Turks started to design our gardens the way the French did. This may well be true, but there was certainly also a Turkish or Iranian style, even if we do not have the sketches or remains of gardens to prove it. We should not forget either that aspects of Turkish attire, such as turbans, robes and textiles, had an influence on European clothing, resulting in the popularity of a fashion called turquerie.

It can be concluded that, in the eighteenth century, Turkish civilization entered into a process of cultural exchange with Western Europe. The reason we have dwelled upon this point is that, these days in France, there is a great amount of interest in things Turkish and in the accounts of ambassadors (*sefaretnames*) in Turkey, an interest shown not only by historians and students of Turkish history but also by scholars of French history and French society in general. Translations are being undertaken, and these are opening up even more perspectives for these scholars. It appears then that we need to look at the eighteenth century from a new perspective, in a new way.

SULTAN MEHMET THE CONQUEROR

On the 30th of March 1432, the son of Sultan Murat II was born. In the beginning, there were doubts as to whether this boy would be the heir to the throne; owing to the course of events and the death of his brother, though, he ended up ascending the throne twice at a remarkably young age. Such a thing was not just rare; it was unique. The first of Murat's reigns ended when he relinquished this throne to his father and became the sanjakbey of the province of Saruhan in the Aegean region of Turkey, which had its capital at Manisa.

However, at the age of 21, in 1453 that is, this youngster besieged a major city, a capital city which at that time was considered the metropolis of the world and was referred to simply as polis. He won a victory which brought him glory in a world where there were no other places that really deserved to be called 'cities'. A few urban centres in the Middle East came close to it, namely Damascus, which had begun to fall from favour within the Islamic world, Baghdad, the rising town of Cairo, and towns in distant Iran like Isfahan and Nishapur. But on the continent of Europe there was not one true city, nowhere that was larger than the place then named Constantinople. In order to conquer this great city, the emperor ordered the construction of the Boazkesen or Rumelia Fortress on the European bank of the Bosphorus, which was completed in just four months.

The conquest of Istanbul was a major event. Its significance lay not only in the place it acquired within the nationalist historical

consciousness of the Turks. If anything, it is not emphasized sufficiently. The conquest of Istanbul was so significant as it was an archetypal Renaissance battle, in which firearms and modern military techniques were used.

In the wars that took place during the Renaissance, the city-states of Italy fought using hired troops, called condottiere. The commanders leading these troops were practically war contractors, and the armies of Italy developed a kind of chess-game strategy instead of a fighting strategy that could lead to troops being killed. One can name a number of wars in which modern weapons and firearms were used anything but efficiently: the war initiated by France, which intervened in the affairs of Italy; the Austrian wars, which occurred much later; and even the Thirty Years' War between 1618 and 1648. In Europe, only the Kingdom of Hungary had taken major steps towards the waging of modern warfare.

For one hundred years, the Ottomans had been fighting with the Kingdom of Hungary and trying to offset Hungarian involvement in the Balkans. In order to be able to compete with the military technology of the Hungarians, they had no choice but to move towards adopting a military strategy and methods that would surpass those of their competitors. The young emperor Mehmet II took it upon himself to achieve this. This is why, during the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans began pounding the walls of Istanbul, then considered the most majestic fortress of the Middle Ages, doing so using four mighty cannons, the classic weapons of the Modern Age, as well as mortars, here used for the first time in history.

By means of this strategy, within four months Mehmet managed to take control of the Bosphorus, thereby preventing the colonies in the Black Sea region from sending aid to the Byzantines. Then he started the siege of Istanbul, using the cannons that had been brought in from Edirne in early April. The ensuing battle actually ended the Middle Ages, and this means our Middle Ages as much as it does that of Europe. Until this point, the Ottoman Empire had not been an empire in the true sense of the word, possessing an ideology that underpinned imperial institutions. Only after the Ottomans had managed to conquer the extensive city of Constantinople did an imperial consciousness start to take root within Ottoman society. It is possible to observe the effects of this conquest in artistic and cultural life, as well as in the etiquette of the court.

To some extent, the onset of the imperial phase in Ottoman history marked the beginning of the modern age of the Ottoman Empire. It is more realistic to differentiate between the Middle Ages and Modern Age in this way than to apply criteria such as the use of printing or the demolition of feudal castles. We should not forget,

moreover, that the conquest of Istanbul led on to the decline of the Italian states of the Mediterranean such as Venice and Genoa, which depended on commerce in the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, the capture of Constantinople made it necessary for other nations to set sail for distant oceans, and even speeded up this process.

The siege of Constantinople lasted fifty-three days and involved extremely intense assaults. Meanwhile, on the night of the 22nd/23rd April, the Ottomans launched vessels from the Bosphorus down to the Golden Horn. This was described in Byzantine and Italian reports produced at that time and was later covered in very thorough accounts by major historians such as Runciman, Babinger and Schlumberger. The fragile fleet that was launched down the Bosphorus consisted of light galleys, making it possible to tug the vessels in just one night.

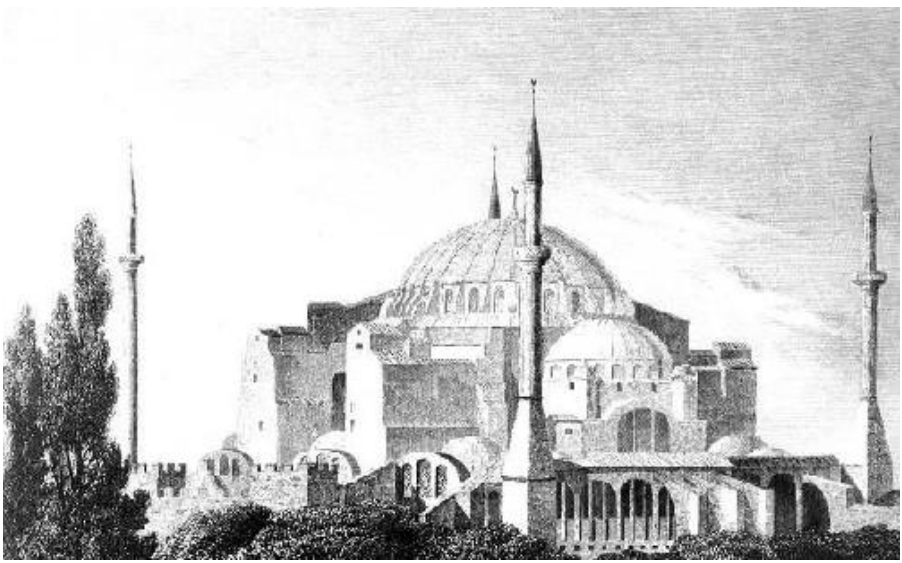
It was not possible for the Ottomans to enter the Golden Horn, which had been closed off with heavy chains. The strategic importance of this waterway faded away. Meanwhile, the area around the city walls continued to be a crucial theatre of war. Ever since the early Middle Ages, the Byzantines had had a special substance which they called *grejuva*, 'Greek fire'. These days, there are obviously more destructive weapons that can be used at sea and on land, yet this should not detract from the efficacy of *grejuva*, the composition of which still remains a mystery to historians. Because of this Greek fire, it was impossible for the Ottomans to besiege the city from the sea.

The siege that the Ottomans carried out, however, would be the first of its kind, very different from the twenty sieges that the Byzantines had endured before. At this point, it is appropriate to dwell briefly on the term 'Byzantium'. I prefer to refer to Istanbul as 'Eastern Rome' rather than 'Byzantium' because 'Byzantium' was a name given by the Europeans after the fall of this empire, with the express purpose of belittling its tradition. The reason was that the Germans wanted to assert that the Roman-Germanic or Holy Roman-Germanic Empire, which was not actually an empire in the true sense of the word, was the true heir to the old Roman Empire. This entailed them attempting to write the fallen Byzantine Empire out of history by referring to it as Byzantium, despite the fact that this empire had identified itself as 'Roman', or 'the Roman state'. We need to be very careful while using the term 'Byzantium' and, if the need occurs, we may have to erase this extremely common expression from our own historiography. After all, Byzantium itself was just a city-colony, no bigger than today's district of Sarayburnu, as it had been since the earliest years of the Hellenistic period, indeed, even before the onset of Hellenism.

As I have mentioned, the Empire had survived around

twenty sieges in the course of its history. Some had been carried out by extremely brutal barbaric gangs, while others were the work of the armies of states. None of these had been successful, but now for the first time an army was besieging the city using the weapons of the modern age. The Renaissance was staring the Byzantine Empire in the face. Indeed, as some commentators rightly state, this battle allows us to see the Renaissance in all its clarity. Western and Turkish historians are united in stating that extremely fierce bombardments took place on the 6th and 12th May and that attacks on these days resulted in much bloodletting. Breaches were made in the walls through the use of enormously effective catapults and cannonballs fired by heavy cannons. But the city continued to defend itself.

The precise size of the besieging Ottoman army is uncertain. A contemporary Italian observer by the name of Barbaro suggests a figure of between 100-150,000. The Byzantine historian Halkokondiles, however, puts it at 400,000. The truth must lie somewhere in-between! Modern historians, from Schlumberger to Runciman, also supply vastly differing figures. At any rate, if we consider the capacity of armies in the Middle Ages to cope with logistics, transportation, food and health, then we cannot be talking about an army of between 200 and 300,000 men. It would only have been possible to provide 100-150,000 people with hygienic conditions. Had the Ottoman army been any larger, epidemic diseases would have broken out immediately. Given that no such epidemic is known to have taken place, we would be wise not to exaggerate the size of the Ottoman army.



There is no doubt that the number of people defending the city was much smaller than the size of the Ottoman forces. Instead, the Byzantine troops relied on their power, their courage, and their will to resist, as well as on the durability of the walls. The legends and beliefs that had prevailed throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire, or rather the Christian Roman Empire, did not die easily. Until the very last moment, the people expected that the Virgin Mary would rescue them. On the last night, at a service in the Hagia Sophia, the Byzantine emperor announced to the assembled that the Virgin Mary would appear. Even when the Turks broke in, people were expecting angels to render the walls asunder, come forth, and throw out the Turks. At that very moment, legends of a catastrophe arose. This great centre of Christendom, which the whole world had been exalting for over a thousand years, had passed into the hands of a new power.

Hagia Sophia went down in the estimation of the people since it symbolized unity with the Catholic world. This does not mean that people were rejecting the theology and religious prescriptions that emanated from Rome. For them, Catholicism meant the Latin invasion, the occupation of the grand city by the Latins in 1204[1]4. These invaders had been so bloodthirsty, so crafty as to plunder all the riches of the city, even the brass plating on the obelisk in the hippodrome in front of Hagia Sophia, and so vulgar as to destroy all the libraries. That is why both Notoras, the last prime minister of the Byzantine Empire, and trusted clerics such as Gennadios, are alleged to have said things along the lines of ‘In this domain, we prefer the turban and the sword of the Turk to the bread of the Frank’.

It is quite clear that the reason why pillage and plunder continued uninterrupted for three days is that the city had not surrendered. Such a response was a kind of convention: if the city had surrendered within a month, this would not have happened. What was equally predictable, though, was that the last emperor of the Byzantine Empire declared, ‘I would rather die than do this [i.e. surrender]. I am the head of the greatest and most authentic Christian empire.’ The corpse of the last emperor, Constantine Palaeologus, was found in a pile of dead bodies and Mehmet the Conqueror acted with appropriate respect, organizing a religious ceremony for his deceased antagonist. Hagia Sophia, which had been the greatest place of worship in Christendom, indeed, in the entire world, now became an almighty place of Islamic worship. No structure in Western Europe, even in Renaissance Italy, had been as attractive as Hagia Sophia. Until the construction of the great churches during the Renaissance, Hagia Sophia had occupied the imagination of Christians everywhere.

This explains why the transformation of Hagia Sophia into a

mosque was of such significance. In the same way, it was a highly meaningful political and cultural act of Republican Turkey after 1930 to transform this place of worship into a museum, after it had been the cause and scene of conflict between humans for so many centuries.

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After the conquest of Istanbul, Mehmet the Conqueror undoubtedly found himself faced with a devastated city, the devastation having started as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century. During the invasion by the Crusaders and the ensuing Latin sovereignty, which lasted for fifty years, a great deal of blood flowed in the city. As the capital of a state that was ever shrinking, Constantinople was unable to recover.

Following Mehmet's conquest of Istanbul, it was necessary to rebuild this city. What was done to realise this? From the ancient province of Karaman in Central Anatolia, which was regarded as something of a human reservoir, a large number of both Muslim and Christian Turks were brought to Istanbul. But this was not enough. Mehmet the Conqueror also resettled the Armenian population from areas under the control of the empire. That is why, in 1461, Hovakim, the metropolitan bishop of Bursa, was appointed as head of the millet (nation / religious community) of Ottoman Armenians. This was the first time in the history of Istanbul that a person assumed the position of patriarch and head of his millet.

After the Armenian religious leaders Ecmiyazin, Sis and Vaspuragan, who held the influential post 'Catholicos of Ahdamar', one other spiritual leader would come to the fore. However, he was more of an administrative leader, the chief of a millet. There was also a Jewish community in Turkey, and especially after the conquest of Istanbul and the collapse of Andalusia, a phase of gradual Jewish immigration got underway, which would last for almost 100 years. In Istanbul a thriving Jewish community constituted itself, opening more than fifty synagogue communities (*kahals*).

From now on, we should not hesitate in calling Istanbul *Konstantinya*, because this was the name used in Ottoman documents. It could also be seen at the beginning of the twentieth century, in imperial decrees and even in books, as well as in the eighteenth century, the time when 'Islambol' was also used on imperial decrees, inscriptions and gravestones. By no means should we be bigoted about names, because this city is a great world capital.

Istanbul came under the control of the Ottoman administration, whereby the Empire was both its owner and support. In the city, old bazaars were developed through the use of new techniques, and the Grand Bazaar (*Kapalı Çarşı*) was established. Judging from the topographic surveying of the city, termed 'Patrology' (Patria Konstantinopolou), we can tell that there had been a bazaar here during the Byzantine period; however, it was only in the age of Mehmet II that the space was arranged in the style of the covered bazaar that we know today. In a short time, the city began to acquire

its own character through the mosques that were built, as well as the bazaars, *khanqahs*[15] and *dergahs*[16] set up around them. People started naming neighbourhoods after a person who had had a mosque, *han* (inn) or hammam (Turkish bath) built, many of whom were pashas. All in all, the sixteenth century was the time when Istanbul developed in earnest.

THE CONQUEST

Without a doubt, among the main effects of the conquest of Istanbul were the rise of a world capital that had been on the verge of collapse and the formation of a Muslim empire that stretched as far as the Balkans. Even though people had long predicted, anticipated or dreaded such a conquest, it was at first not easy to swallow. And it should be remembered that this applied not just to the Western Christian world but also to Eastern peoples.

The Hungarians tried to organise a Crusade, while the Pope endeavoured to mobilise the Christian nations with a call for unity. Italy, however, was wracked in fear, and a short while later Gedik Ahmet Pasha would enter Otranto, in the province of Puglia, at the very base of the heel of Italy. Most of the narratives about this invasion, we must bear in mind, are highly speculative. And this was not simply a matter of anti-Muslim sentiment; at the same time, it was a propaganda technique designed to unite the Christians. Ever since that time, historians have made spurious references to alleged Muslim massacres of hundreds of people and have claimed that the Ottoman invaders presented the Italians with the ultimatum 'Change your faith or face death.' What is important is that the historians who wrote such things did not think them through. Had such events really happened in that period, news about them would have spread. In reality, though, these scare-stories were a defence mechanism of sorts. For another variation, we can look at how Sultan Mehmet's conquest of Istanbul was received by the Akkoyunlu Empire, an eastern neighbour of the Ottoman Empire. In the official history of this state, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakırıyye*, the conquest was completely ignored, as if it had never happened. Thus, the Akkoyunlus also adopted a negative stance to this critical event, albeit in a different way.

One reason for the Akkoyunlus' apparent disapproval was that the conquest of Istanbul was a momentous event that occurred to the glory of a rival dynasty. We should not forget, moreover, that the Akkoyunlu sovereign, Uzun (Tall) Hasan, had family connections with the rulers of the Empire of Trebizond (today Trabzon), established in the aftermath of the calamitous Crusade of 1204 and governed by the Comnene dynasty. Thus, Uzun Hasan's grandson, the future Shah Ismail of the Safavid Empire, would be related via his father to famous

Muslim Turks while, through his mother, carrying the blue blood of the Comnene dynasty. It is clear then that a state like the Akkoyunlu Empire would not welcome Ottoman sovereignty. At the same time, it should be born in mind that certain powers within the Christian world considered it the lesser of two evils to make contacts with the new Ottoman rulers and government at the earliest possible moment.

The example of the Khanate of the Crimea is worth mentioning. This was under the control of a dynasty that had emerged victorious from the conflict among the various Kipchak Turkish states situated in the steppes of the Ukraine and Southern Russia, a conflict itself precipitated by the demise of the once powerful Altnordu Empire. A short time after the conquest of Istanbul, the Khanate opted to make the best of a bad situation and sign a treaty with the Ottoman State, through which it could maintain its sovereignty while still recognising the influence of the Ottoman Empire. Several years later, in 1475, a significant portion of the Crimean peninsula, extending as far as Feodosia and Sudak, aligned itself directly with the centre by accepting the status of an Ottoman sanjak. The more northerly territories officially passed under the administration of the Khanate, which was now effectively a vassal state of the Ottomans.

Between 1461 and 1463, the conquest of the Balkans was accomplished in a similar manner. It is not easy to get over to a large readership what this conquest entailed and to show how Albania and Bosnia were incorporated into the Empire. This difficulty is, in fact, only to be expected: an appreciation of history cannot come from reading and listening alone, as one also needs to have knowledge of the geography of an area being studied. For this reason, my advice to young people today is to try and see the locations in question. And when they look at the rugged land of Ioannina, Shkoder and Bosnia, they will really come to recognize the masterfulness and sophistication of the military and diplomatic strategies used in this conquest.

There is no doubt that the Ottoman State had become an *arbiter mundi*, that is, an arbitrator in international affairs and a world power. It would be true to say that the second half of the fifteenth century was the period when the Ottomans actively embraced their role as a global empire.

The papacy came to the conclusion that there was no use in establishing relations with this new emperor, who was, after all, a barbarian Muslim troublemaker. Yet this was nothing but self-deception. Pope Pius II wrote a letter to Sultan Mehmet, essentially telling him ‘Convert to Christianity! Once you do this, you will be the ruler of the world in any case… For this, all you need is,’ he continued, ‘aquae pauci’, a little water; in other words, he was recommending baptism. Although there is no evidence of this letter

being sent, drafts of it and other documents along the same lines can be found in the archives. Of course, it was inconceivable that such a letter would have the desired effect on Mehmet the Conqueror. Nonetheless, a debate has evolved around this point, since some have argued that Mehmet the Conqueror was actually a Christian.

This claim has no basis in reality. All the same, Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror was certainly not an emperor like those who would succeed him: he was neither pious like his son Beyazd II nor a ruler like his grandson Yavuz Sultan Selim (Selim I). He undoubtedly had a creed, yet he was probably not particularly zealous in his behaviour and style. As a matter of fact, during his reign he exhibited a marked penchant for the cosmopolitan. As an example, one could point to his intimate involvement in the Hurufi movement led by Fazlallah Astarabadi. The most important feature of this strange sect originating in Iran was that it made certain predictions and comments based on the relationships between numbers and letters, a practice comparable to that of the Jewish Cabbalists. The Hurufis managed to attract followers from every religion and cult. But while this cosmopolitan movement initially seemed destined to grow, because of the interest shown by Emperor Mehmet or perhaps because he was even a member, Mehmet's grand-vizier Mahmud Pasha had it violently suppressed, and this despite the fact that he himself was a *devşirme* who came from a Christian clerical family. He suppressed it, moreover, using fire, even though burning people was not common in the Islamic tradition. In fact, this was probably a vestige of an older culture. People nonetheless appreciated Mahmud's efforts in assuaging the dissent of those who had been resettled by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror and even in blocking some of the resettlement from the province of Karaman. He gained additional popularity among large sections of the public, especially *ulema*, sheikhs, and savants and dervishes of sects, by partly forestalling another of the padishah's measures, namely the appropriation of land belonging to certain *dergahs* and *zaviyes* (small mosques) in order to meet the ongoing demands of war. Unfortunately, the sultan eventually had to slay his grand vizier following a number of disagreements between them, after which people affectionately dubbed Mahmud Pasha veli, meaning 'protector' and 'guardian'. The manuscripts related to the legend of Mahmud Pasha make up a large share of the Ottoman manuscript literature that still survives; even today, an orientalist or historian will have no difficulty in gaining access to these manuscripts.

Sultan Mehmet really was a great ruler, a great politician, and a great man of culture. As the case of this Ottoman emperor demonstrates, those people whom historians come to regard as great were not necessarily recognized and admired as such at the time in which they lived. The truth is that Sultan Mehmet was engaged in the task of establishing an empire, and I would emphasise that, during the entire six-century history of the Ottoman polity, he was the emperor who made the greatest changes to the social, religious and cultural life of not only Anatolia, the motherland of the Turks, but also of the Ottoman territories outside Turkey.

Sultan Mehmet was a Renaissance seignior. The rumours that he could speak many languages are, in my opinion, well-founded. Trapezuntus and Giacomo Languschi, for instance, report that there was nobody who could read Hellenic sources as well as him. There may be some degree of exaggeration here, yet he certainly did speak Greek. When Greek sources were read out loud to him, he required little translation. His Greek vocabulary was extensive, as was his Latin. That he knew Arabic and Persian is evident from the poetry that he, like many members of his dynasty, composed. It would appear too that he was fascinated by geography and history, taking a particular interest in Troy. The location of the ancient city had obviously not yet been discovered, but we can assume that a lot of information about Troy was available in that era. Another part of the world with which he was particularly familiar was Italy. He knew the map of the country by heart and had a profound knowledge of this territory which, had he not died, he would surely have conquered. Ample evidence of this is provided by the reports sent from Istanbul by the *baglio* and the *podesta*, the ambassadors of Venice and Genoa respectively.

There were traces of Italy everywhere, in Cairo, Alexandria, Iran and Eastern Anatolia, yet nobody in the East or the West was as knowledgeable about Italy and Italian culture as the Eastern emperor, Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. Ironically, though, Mehmet would be the person to pull away the economic foundation of the Italian world. It was he who brought the legendary great empire of Venice to an end, through a series of military and political triumphs: the conquest of Istanbul and the Mediterranean islands of Euboea and Samothrace; the eradication of the Black Sea colonies, most notably the Pontic Kingdom (1463); the annexation of the Crimea in 1475; the establishment of sovereignty over Wallachia and Bogdania, and the bringing of the Adriatic under Ottoman hegemony.

Despite all the positive things that were written about Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, because of his role in the demise of Venice he was probably the most feared and hated ruler in the Western world. When we look at him within the context of Turkish national history, Sultan Mehmet ought to be regarded as a pioneer who created a balance between West and East, whilst opening up the Turkish state and people, and above all Turkish culture, to the West. In claiming this, however, I would like to accentuate that Mehmet the Conqueror was an Easterner without an inferiority complex regarding the West. Such a mentality is rarely found among the intellectuals of today's Turkey, let alone among its statesmen. He was an Easterner, yet at the same time he knew and admired the West. This explains why the cultural climate that prevailed in the Turkish Empire of the fifteenth century was much more fertile even than that of later periods.

Let me mention several of Mehmet's most notable achievements. For one thing, he put an end to the Venetian domination over Byzantium and the Latin Empire that had been established in 1204. He tipped the balance of power in favour of Genoa, even though Genoa at that time was in decline. He was able to accumulate an extraordinary amount of knowledge of the domestic affairs and cultural life of contemporary European states. It is clear, moreover, that he was interested not just in places but also in their histories and cultures. As two Ottoman writers of the era, Kritovulos and KemalPaşazade, point out, the Conqueror had ancient Greek and Roman sculptures brought to Istanbul, and though he did not go so far as having them erected in the squares of the capital, he liked to surround himself with Italian and Ottoman-Greek consultants on Greek and Roman history. The circle of historians around the emperor included Kritovulos and Languschi, who remained over from the old Eastern Roman Empire, as well as the Turkish historian Tursun Bey. I should note too that Rabbi Kapsali of the Jewish community of Istanbul practically deified Mehmet in his history of the era.

The capital city truly was a cultural amalgam. On top of that, the emergent empire was in the process of forging its imperial ideology. Up until the time of Sultan Mehmet, no chronicle had been written that dealt with the events, wars and development of the Ottoman state from its very beginnings. But in the last years of the rule of Sultan Mehmet's father, Murat Khan II, and especially during the reign of Sultan Mehmet, people started producing accounts of this kind. In these examples of a new Ottoman historiography, the influence of an imperial ideology is evident. That is to say, they attest to the emergence of a new order, a new world view, a new lifestyle.

Parallel to this, Sultan Mehmet set about redefining court etiquette, no longer, for example, eating together with his viziers. He also gave up the custom, introduced by his father, of presiding over the *Divan-ı Hümayun* (Imperial Council), and instead listened in to the deliberations of the Council through a lattice. Sultan Mehmet acted very courteously towards the *Rum*[17] Patriarchate, even granting him some privileges, because he himself was a Roman Emperor. Sultan Mehmet was not the only person to make the latter claim: contemporary and later Turkish historians like Trapezuntus, Kritovulos, Ibn-i Kemal and KemalPaşazade assert that Mehmet the Conqueror ascended the throne of Rome and was a Roman kaiser. They add that he really did take his place on the Roman throne, and that his slaying of the famous aristocrats who made up the last Byzantine dynasty testified to this, since what the Ottomans were doing was rolling back the influence of the Byzantine aristocracy and positioning themselves as successors to the earlier (Roman) tradition.

Sultan Mehmet famously declared that 'Just as there is a single sun in the sky, so too should there be a single state and single religion in this world'. This was a theory of universalism, one to which he would always return. Interestingly, the Greek (Rum) Orthodox church's invocation of the Roman tradition in its very name manifests a similar claim to universalism.

To be sure, Mehmet's claim to universalism was a bitter pill for both Westerners and Easterners to swallow. However, even if people did not express their approval of it, they accepted it in their minds and acted accordingly. In any case, they had no other choice! When you study the fifteenth century, you get the feeling that the sole purpose behind Turkish history until that point was to foster the birth of this empire. That is to say, just as the Renaissance was the period in which all the previous strands in Western civilization came together, the fifteenth century was also the time when the various elements and structures of the Turkish and Eastern world reached maturity.

From that point on, the history of nations would be shaped by their relationship to the notion of Ottomanism[18]. In the history of

the Turks and of the Muslim nations, those who remained loyal to the ideology of Ottomanism benefited from this, while those who distanced themselves from it were faced with disaster. This is what happened in the adventure north of the Volga, that is, in the history of Russia. And this was also the tragic fate of Andalusia, which for at least three centuries had enlightened the world in the fields of science and culture.

OTTOMAN CUISINE

What did our ancestors used to eat? What actually was 'Ottoman-Turkish cuisine'? To put it briefly, it was a combination of different culinary traditions. Unfortunately, the research on this subject is unsatisfactory. Some studies do little more than document how our mothers and grandmothers cooked aubergine or prepared this or that dessert, findings which do not take us very far. Other works based on documentary evidence are much more illuminating, examples being the studies of Stefanos Yerasimos, the late Professor Süheyl Ünver, and a dear friend Turgut Kut. Yet all in all, no outstanding history of Turkish cuisine has yet been written, and writing one would not be easy; it could well require an international effort.

One of the fallacies that we frequently encounter today is the identification of 'Ottoman-Turkish cuisine' with the cuisine of Istanbul alone. This is illogical. A great cuisine is not something that can be determined from the richness of the cuisine of a single city or capital. Today, anyone thinking that French cuisine consisted purely of the cuisine of Paris or Versailles would be truly mistaken. In fact, no one would even think such a thing, as the French, like the Chinese, long ago came out with the research and data to refute such a view. Turks, however, have not paid sufficient attention to the culinary traditions of the various provinces and cities that made up the Ottoman Empire, ignoring the remnants of these traditions still alive today and overlooking certain documents. As a result of this, our general approach to the field of cuisine is extremely flawed.

For instance, it is sometimes claimed that while people living in the Aegean in the Ottoman period were familiar with olive oil and used it in their cooking, this substance was unknown to people in Anatolia. The records of seventeenth century *kadıs suggest* otherwise. They reveal that, among the many duties of a *kadı*, who was both the judge and mayor of the locality in which he served, was to fix a price (*narh*) for those commodities, the so-called *hevayic-i zaruriye*, which were bought and sold in large numbers, a task which he carried out in cooperation with representatives of the local guild. In the price book for Ankara, as well as in the price books of other

areas, we find olive oil mentioned, under the name *'rugan-ı zeyt'*. This tells us that people in Ankara did use olive oil, albeit not as much as those in the Aegean, the origin of so much of this commodity. The same point emerges from Deniz Alphan's book on Turkish-Jewish cuisine, *Dina'nın Mutfağı* (Dina's Kitchen). Here, Alphan shows that the prohibition of the use of milk and meat together according to the dietary laws of Kashrut meant that meat could not be cooked in butter, and this was why Turkish Jews used olive oil in their cooking wherever they lived, the Aegean region or elsewhere.

Cleary, in Ottoman Ankara, with its population of 20,000, olive oil was used by a lot of people, albeit less commonly than in oil-producing areas such as Aydın, Saruhan and Manisa. In later years, particularly during the month of Ramadan, we find Istanbulites partaking in different kinds of food from Saudi Arabia and other Arabic countries, as well as eating the legendary pastrami from Kayseri in Eastern-Central Anatolia. What is more, in some places, people used soap from other provinces of the Empire. In other words, it was not just edible items that were distributed and used around the Empire; the same was true of all vital commodities.

The Ottoman Empire being an agricultural country, vegetables were widespread. However, because of the climate, sometimes they were in short supply in certain regions, and this is when pickled vegetables came to acquire great importance. They became popular across Anatolia, with every area having its own style of pickle. Another important foodstuff was the sweet pastry known as baklava, which is made from grain. Despite the dominance of the culinary fashions of Istanbul, people also enjoyed and even hankered after the baklava of Aleppo and Damascus; yet, in addition, each province and city had its own version of baklava with its own special taste. Thus, this thing we call 'Turkish cuisine' used to be very rich; today, however, it is in decline.

Comparing Turkish cuisine with that of the wider region, it is clear that neither Central Asia nor Iran could boast such a diverse and tasty cuisine. So what did we do differently? Most probably, the various millets living in Anatolia had a role in shaping certain culinary practices such as the use of jam or the preparation of vegetables. Armenian cuisine, for instance, must have made a contribution, as must the cuisine of the Hellenes and other coastal peoples when it came to the cooking of fish. Without any doubt, Ottoman involvement in the Balkans, which started early on and continued for a long time, was an important factor that enabled the cuisine to spread and certain customs and traditions to catch on. But just as we gave something to the cuisines of such regions, we most also have borrowed some of their cooking techniques. This is no

enigma. What is an enigma is how, today, Asia Minor can still boast a cuisine that is much richer than that of the countries around it.

It is impossible to solve this enigma and not much easier to understand it in the first place. What cannot be denied, though, is that we are turning our backs on our ancient cuisine and our old techniques of cooking, storing and preserving food. Today, people do not cook using braziers; indeed, they do not even know what braziers are. Why do they not use them? Is it that difficult? Today, people do not use earthenware either, maybe because it seems much easier to cook using a steel saucepan. All in all, people nowadays regard cooking as hard work and a great inconvenience. What they fail to realise, though, is that in the Western culture we try so hard to emulate the ability to cook is regarded as a great merit: cooking well is a sign of culture, and in the West a good cook is held in much higher esteem than any intellectual. Although my generation were brought up on a rich cuisine, which our mothers and grandmothers tried hard to uphold, our children, male and female, are avoiding the alleged drudgery of cooking in the old way. This can only be a loss.

Let us leave cuisine aside for now; in any case, it is not our real focus here. Let us discuss instead how the cities of the Empire got their food. There can be no doubt that the vineyards, gardens, market gardens, grain stores and mills located in the vicinity of the smaller towns of the empire constituted easily accessible resources. Such towns did not have slaughterhouses, animals being slaughtered instead on the farm or at home. In these towns, people dedicated time to both cooking and eating food, doing both with great care and love. While we certainly need to be aware of conditions in the provinces, we must not forget that the Istanbul we are dealing with was a great city, and that it had been so since around 4 AD. As we have noted, there was no city like Istanbul in Europe or Asia, since Asian cities like Baghdad and Isfahan did not develop until much later, after which their populations increased, bringing problems similar to those faced by Istanbul. Historians have put the populations of such cities at millions, but in those times it would have been impossible for 1.5 million people to live in a city, because the infrastructure, sewage system and health provision in such a place was not sufficient to maintain such a large population. For this reason, a population of several hundred thousand would have been regarded as large. So where did they find grain for so many people? Where did their flour, wheat, meat, fruit and vegetables come from? These were provided by empires using the system of transportation known as the monopoly system, which actually had to be enforced upon some communities.

Istanbul got its grain, flour and wheat from Dobrudja, a region between the Danube and its opening into the Black Sea, which

today includes both Bulgarian and Romanian territory. It can be assumed that Istanbul's dairy products, its butter and cheese, came from the Crimea, since the steppes beyond the Crimea were famous for their milk. The Khanate of the Crimea shipped these products to Istanbul by sea using its own resources. That is why, for example, the harbour and sanjak of Kefe (the Ottoman name for the earlier Genoan colony of Feodosia) were directly subordinate to Istanbul rather than to the Khanate of the Crimea. In Kefe, tough measures were taken to deal with the black market, in other words to prevent hoarding and smuggling. This was because, especially from the sixteenth century onwards, the trading nations of the Mediterranean resorted to illegal trade in order to siphon off to the West those products that the Ottomans had hitherto shipped using the monopoly system. That is to say, while the Ottomans, using the monopoly system, were shipping wheat at a cost of 10 liras per unit, foreign merchants would pay 11 or 12 liras.

As for Istanbul's meat, it came from the Thracian plain of Bulgaria, and shipping the herds was the responsibility of a particular group of butcher-drovers known as *celebkeşans*. Grapes came from the Mediterranean islands and from the Aegean. That illegal trade was a problem in these two areas is suggested by the fact that imperial edicts (ferman, pl. fermanlar) were issued banning ships from transferring goods to foreign ships as well as from docking at other harbours en route and offloading goods.

At any rate, for a long time Istanbul was not an easy place to earn one's keep and to live. Sometimes Istanbulites faced long, severe winters, while at other times a rebellion would erupt, shops and bakeries would be closed down and the city would be left without any food. On occasions there would be shortages, the price of fuel or the price of flour would suddenly soar, and there would be nothing left to buy. In such circumstances, the people became restless, and this restlessness would be a headache for many a *kadı*, since the *kadı* of Istanbul was the chief-judge, the mayor, and a high-ranking member of the *ulema* class all in one. But it was not just the *kadı* who was in trouble - the grand-vizier was too, as he and his steward were also supposed to be in charge of managing Istanbul. Emperors were infuriated by the lengths that these officials went to deny responsibility, lying, concealing, and providing false information.

Fires were certainly a big problem for Istanbul, the reason being that, after a fire, it was very difficult to find the materials, master-craftsmen and labourers needed to reconstruct hundreds of wooden buildings. Immediately, such workers, as well as architects, were brought in from all the provinces of the Empire, edicts were issued in an attempt to procure the required materials, and a feverish

effort was launched to restore and rearrange the city and renovate those buildings that had been burnt or demolished; all this, however, was not cheap.

It is clear that the problem of food provision in Istanbul in a sense led its people to be less generous and less at ease than those in the provinces. In the nineteenth century, however, when transportation facilities improved, everything began to change. First of all, at that time the area surrounding Istanbul was full of kitchen-gardens, and this even applied to the villages along the Bosphorus. This is why local products such as lettuce from Langa, cucumbers from Çengelköy and strawberries from Arnavutköy - all of these being settlements relatively close to central Istanbul - seem like legends to us today. Nowadays, only people who are particularly interested will be able to track down and buy these products in certain locations and at certain times of the year. The reason is that only symbolic quantities of these products are grown today, whereas in Ottoman times they were freely available in the vicinity of the areas of Istanbul from which they derived.

This was not the case with bread and meat, which needed to be brought in from Anatolia. Until grain became abundant in Istanbul due to the agricultural activities of migrants from Rumelia who settled along the railway lines connecting Istanbul with Ankara and Istanbul with Konya via Afyon, the so-called Baghdad Railway, Turkey was dependent on wheat from Russia and Dobrudja, in other words the imported commodity.

During the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, it was possible for the first time to feed the Turkish army with wheat from Anatolia, thanks to the railway that had been extended into the Anatolian interior since 1890. Such advances in transportation undoubtedly allowed Turkish society to live in a modern way, so that it became much easier than it had been for residents of areas of central Istanbul such as Fatih and Aksaray to find meat and bread and, above all, fruit and vegetables. Even more importantly, the city was able to solve its problem of access to sugar because of Austria and Russia's production and sale of cones of sugar. The breakout of the First World War, however, put an end to this solution, as people were no longer able to get hold of this imported sugar. Because they had also abandoned their old habit of eating things like honey, molasses and so on, they fell ill simply from a lack of sugar. Everybody knows that an important symptom of such a shortage is scabies. Furthermore, many people perished because the weakening of their immune systems made them prone to diseases such as influenza. This is why the populace of Istanbul suffered great losses during World War One.

All this pointed to one inescapable fact: when it came to

agriculture, Turkey needed to process and make use of its unexploited sources. This explains why the first thing done in the Republican Era was to build sugar factories. And it is also the reason why, for those ruling the country, sugar is a strategic substance, even if we ordinary people complain about sugar and say that we should halt production of it because of the excessive cost. It has often been said that we can neither live without sugar nor get by without producing it.

Istanbul developed a rich cuisine and managed—as did some other provinces—to ship in unusual foodstuffs that one would not expect to find in such a traditional economy which had to make do with an underdeveloped transportation system. Although these 'achievements' led people to acquire a more refined palate, they also meant that these people were less able to cope with shortages. During the First World War, the nation proved completely incapable of dealing with the hardship it faced. In Vienna and Berlin, people had to cope with the same difficulties, but they seemed to manage better. The probable reason is that our distribution and rationing system did not work as efficiently as that in these two capitals.

When Sultan Abdülhamit Khan, who died towards the end of the war, was being given a ceremonial send-off from the Beylerbeyi Palace to his eternal resting place in the tomb of Sultan Mahmud on the Divanyolu, all the women and common people of the neighbourhood leaned out of their windows and simultaneously lamented and protested against the government of the day, shouting: 'My dear sultan who gave us our daily bread, how can you desert us like this?' It had not been easy to enter a long-lasting total war unprepared!

During World War Two, although Turkey was not directly involved in the fighting, the government again took control of food, fearing a recurrence of the earlier shortages. There was the same outcome, with prices rising steeply, and this was not forgotten for a long time. Indeed, although it is not pleasant to talk about the cases of these two world wars, they did actually result in greater determination with respect to the food issue in Turkey. What I mean is that Turkey got organised. After the Second World War, even the most out-of-the-way village in some far-flung corner of Turkey could find a way to put its produce on the market. In today's Turkey, in fact, we do not face the problems involving food that cities in the nineteenth century had to deal with. Even then, with the exception of the occasional queue for olive oil, people were able to find everything they wanted. Now this shortage has been overcome too and, when it comes to basic food needs, Turkey is the cheapest country in Europe.

There is no doubt that one of our main sources of information about the Ottoman and Seljuk empires is the writing of foreign travellers. The area that they visited was settled by Turks and became truly Turkish from the eleventh century on. The Italians, Genovese and Venetians, who knew the Near East well and became involved in trade and diplomacy on the territory of Turkey much earlier than the Turks, namely from the twelfth century on, called the country Türchia or Turcmenia. Because of our imperial pretensions, however, we gave our country names like 'land of the Romans', 'region of the Romans', 'Seljuks of Rumelia' and 'Rumelia', all of which were associated with the Roman legacy.

The comments of those who travelled to this country are very important. Today it is possible to find in the archives of the Vatican systematic and regular reports about Turkey dating back to 1135 AD. It is certain that the more recent archives in Venice and Genoa—the contents of which we still do not exactly know—complement the riches offered by the Vatican archive. Many accounts have already been published. If we look at only the travelbooks written on the Ottoman lands in the nineteenth century, we see that there are more than 5000 of them. The oldest known French and German travelbooks on Turkey date back to earlier times, that is, the pre-Ottoman era. These are from Byzantine Istanbul, and they really do describe the Anatolia of the time in a vivid manner. Here, the most prominent travellers were the famous French traveller Bertrandon de la Broquiere, who wrote about the era of Murat II soon after Castilian envoy Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo had done, and Hans Schiltberger, a German traveller who was held captive in Turkey and recorded his observations. Schiltberger documented a pater noster prayer in the Tatar language, that is, in Crimea-Kazan Chagatai Turkish. This is a very interesting detail, showing us that even that far back missionaries were preparing Biblical and prayer texts as propaganda targeted at Turkish peoples.

Europeans of that period were clearly fascinated by the East, and it is striking that books like that of Schiltberger were written before the invention of printing and disseminated in manuscript form. This suggests that, even prior to the advent of the printing press, some nations read so much that they even appreciated research on Turkey. Veritable masterworks related to the country were produced in the genres of travel-writing, philosophy and geography. Jean Chardin, a famous Frenchman of the seventeenth century, was the author of the travelbooks *From Paris* to *Tbilisi* and *From Paris* to *Isfahan*. Here, beside the vivid and very educative travel descriptions, we see something else: Europeans had started to see the Orient, that is, the Eastern Mediterranean, as 'lazy, unchanging, undeveloping countries'. Chardin

expresses this stance in his comment 'Nothing changes in Asia. There is laziness. Yet in Europe there is constant change'. In the work of Chardin, a writer of the Baroque renaissance, we can see that the West had reached an apex when it came to self-adoration. We observe the same in the writing of Jean Baptiste Tavernier, one of the most important travellers of the French Enlightenment period, whose Eastern Mediterranean travelbook (*Voyages to the Levant*) was of particular significance and who published his books under the title 'Six Journeys in Iran and Turkey'. The observations of these two travellers are important not only in terms of the information they provide but also because they show us how the Occident had started to see the Orient or, more accurately, that the Occident had created a concept and civilisation called 'the Orient'.

One person who provides us with some very revealing information about Turkish state and social life is Nicolas de Nicolay, author of *Navigation into the Turkie.* Strikingly, de Nicolay does not use the name 'Turkey' favoured by English-speakers today; though we Turks should not get a complex about the fact that English-speakers associate our country with a bird, it is nonetheless interesting that de Nicolay actually uses something very close to the Turkish form T*ürkiye*.

Salomon Schweigger, whom we encountered earlier, was a very bigoted Protestant priest who came to Turkey at the end of the sixteenth century. More interesting than the information in his travelbook is his view of the world. This book is an ugly text, written

in modern German but with a grammar and lexis all of its own, and with great inconsistency in spelling. Schweigger's travelbook, which - like so many others - is in facsimile format, contains a description of the Topkapıi Palace. Even in his description of the Turkish bath he feels it necessary to mention the Turkish hoards, a horrific spectre for every Westerner. Schweigger and his ilk could not stop themselves from writing about, or drawing, Turkish armies. All the same, observations such as the following are very interesting: 'Those people wear a piece of cloth even in the bath. They are such well-mannered people. We need to learn manners and morality from those barbarians'. Elsewhere we read: 'Their houses are so poor yet at the same time so expensive that they cost as much as our big bourgeois houses'. And here is another, even more interesting observation: 'Like all phony religious people, they build great temples and public monuments to deceive Allah, yet their houses are in a terrible state'.

The famous explorer Evliya Çelebi lived for some time in Vienna, where he was part of the Ottoman diplomatic mission and thus had the opportunity to describe the world outside the Ottoman Empire too. Today it is not just Turks who find what he has to say interesting but also historians across the world, as well as ordinary Europeans. With his penchant for satire and his sharp wit, Çelebi liked to turn his pen to extraordinary contradictions. Because he had a good ear, he also proved to be an excellent documenter of languages. In his travelbooks it is even possible to find traces of Caucasian languages which are no longer spoken, and this is why people from the Caucasus regard him as an indispensable source.

There are points where Çelebi gets it wrong or makes things up. At times, just to amuse his readers, he mentions ridiculous things such as a cat freezing while jumping from one roof to another. This does not negate the fact, though, that his travelbook is a very rich source on Turkology, geography and culture, a truly monumental work. There has never been anyone else like Evliya Çelebi in Turkey, and it is difficult to find an equal to him in Europe too.

This said, even if they may not be on a par with the work of Çelebi, there are other important sources coming to light today. One such example is the well-known travelbook of the Ottoman diplomat known as Yirmi Sekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi. From Mehmet Efendi, we do not learn much about the so-called Regency Period in France, the period when Louis XV reigned while still a child. There are innumerable official and unofficial records, letters and books that can help us do that, sources on French and Occidental civilization that have been scrutinised by scholars from a good many countries. So why are people besides Turkologists and French and other sociologists and historians still so fascinated by Mehmet Efendi's travel account? The

reason is that this work offers another perspective, another critique, another kind of assessment.

What the example of Mehmet Efendi shows us is that, if we want to understand the past of a civilization, we need to have access not just to reams of documents and notes taken by members of earlier generations but also the evaluations of outsiders. It is vital that we recognise this. Furthermore, such sources are particularly indispensable for understanding the social life, economy and culture of a multinational civilization like that of the Ottomans, which occupied the territory of different nations, which ruled many ethnic groups and lasted for no less than six centuries, stretching into the modern era.

Great changes occurred in the nineteenth century. This was when writers like Guillaume Antoine Olivier, Charles Texier and Andreas David Mordtmann turned their attention to Turkey, some of these authors really being men of quality. To be sure, such men were not just prejudiced with respect to the physical environment; they were also bigoted towards Ottoman culture. However, because they were very knowledgeable people and even spoke Turkish, we cannot just disregard or gloss over their prejudices. We have to make an effort to understand them.

Turkish travelbooks of the nineteenth century are also very interesting. One of these is the 'journal' that statesman and humorous playwright 'Director' Ali Bey wrote while on his way to Baghdad and India. In this book, we can see how Ali Bey perceived Baghdad in the time of Mithad Pasha's reforms, and we can compare his impressions of India with the very interesting ones of numerous other contemporary Turkish travellers.

More significant still than these works are the writings of Turkish travellers of the twentieth century, foremost among them the journalist and author Falih Rfk Atay. When examining how these writers saw the Balkans, Western Europe, Communist Russia, Fascist Italy and India under British rule, it is impossible to overlook the traces of a political view, a certain perspective on the world. In this sense, travelbooks are not only sources through which we can find out about concrete incidents and actors of the past; at the same, they are sources that help us to conceive the things that historians have most difficulty in pinning down: the mentalities and preoccupations of people, and their perceptions of their neighbours and the world. This is why travelbooks need to be translated into Turkish as soon as possible, and these works in need of 'translation' include the great travelbooks of our ancestors, written in the Ottoman script, which should be rewritten in the Roman alphabet. If we fail to undertake these translations, we will be neglecting the fact that these

travelbooks are sources that can provide us with what newspapers, letters, official documents and official records cannot.

OTTOMAN PALACES AND THE TOPKAPII PALACE

The palaces of the Ottoman Empire and all their splendour have been the subject of much discussion and sloganeering. An entire generation in Turkey grew up hearing the story of 'the Ottoman palaces and the bankruptcy of the Empire' that was recounted in school textbooks. In the last decade, however, Turkish people have started to visit the capital cities of Europe and Russia and, now that they have seen the palaces and pavilions of these countries, they realise that the expenditure of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century was so modest as not even to bear comparison with that of other great states.

Let us not forget that the Ottoman Empire did belong to this category of 'great states' and that such 'great states' had to abide by a common protocol, which brought with it certain requirements. Most importantly, these countries exchanged ambassadors. Nowadays all countries do this, but in earlier times only a handful of states were represented abroad in this way. Other states would be represented in foreign capitals by officials and diplomats whom we may term 'intermediate envoys' or 'intermediate envoys with extraordinary powers', but these representatives constituted a different category from the 'ambassadors proper'. The latter were covered by the courtly protocol of the country in which they were serving. Thus, the place where the ruler or head of state authorised them to live was called a palace, not simply a residence. We see this from examples like the 'Palais de France' in Istanbul, where special security was also provided. The degree of deference shown towards ambassadors was striking. For instance, it was a binding duty for the host government to lay a road leading up to the embassy. The authorities also kept an eye on the buildings due to be erected in the vicinity of an embassy. In Istanbul, people were not allowed to build or open a drinking house close to an embassy. The vehicle and boat of the ambassador of a great state were registered and granted priority according to the protocol.

Without question, in the nineteenth century the Topkapı Palace was not in a position to uphold the existing state protocol. It could not accommodate a visiting head of state, nor was it a suitable venue for a treaty ceremony. It was not even possible to receive an ambassador there. Particularly after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, diplomatic rules were redefined, as a result of which our ancestral palace lost its sway even more. This is why Mahmud II rightly opted to live outside the palace. Although this sultan did not initiate a move

to a new palace during his reign, his son Abdülmecid Khan was able to settle in the Dolmabahçe Palace in the final days of his own sultanate. During the reign of Abdülmecid's brother, Sultan Abdulaziz Khan, the Çraan Palace and Beylerbeyi Palace were also incorporated into the ambit of the state protocol. Finally, Sultan Abdulhamit Khan had the Yldz Palace built.

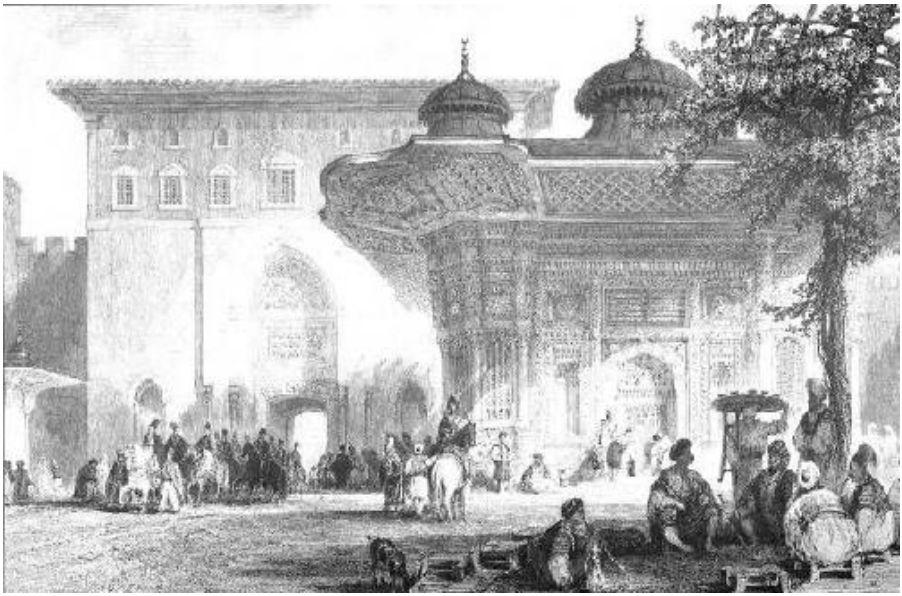
The Dolmabahçe Palace is not in the same league as the Hofburg Imperial Palace in Vienna, the Louvre or the Palace of Versailles in Paris, or the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, which is now used as the Hermitage Museum. At most it may be likened to the Russian summer palace at Peterhof in St. Petersburg. The only two noteworthy sections of the Dolmabahçe Palace are the ostentatious and spacious Great Ceremonial Hall, in which ambassadors would submit their letters of credence to the sultan, and the so-called *Süfera Odasi*, a room set aside for envoys, where ambassadors had the chance to converse with the sultan for a while. Enthronement ceremonies evidently took place in the Ceremonial Hall and, during these ceremonies, individuals covered by the Imperial protocol, namely senior officials, spiritual leaders and envoys in the capital, convened in the presence of the sultan. The same occurred when dignitaries came to express their greetings to the sultan on the occasion of religious holidays. With the exception of these two rooms, there is nothing luxurious about the Dolmabahçe Palace; its only real luxury, in fact, is its magnificent view of the Bosphorus.

Quite clearly, in the nineteenth century the money spent on the Imperial palaces was critically needed. Indeed, it is worth pointing out that, apart from their elegant natural settings, nothing made them comparable to the palaces of other modern states. When we consider that, according to international protocol, the Ottoman Empire ranked among the great states, the condition of its official buildings was obviously a cause for concern.

It is indeed striking that, within Ottoman society, neither palaces nor the private mansions of viziers and other administrators were particularly attractive. The same could be said for the buildings of spiritual leaders, Muslim or Christian: unlike the pope, for example, the patriarch never possessed a summer and winter palace. The viziers made do without lavish mansions or palaces and even the sultans lived in a fair degree of modesty. Süleyman the Magnificent ordered the construction of the awesome Süleymaniye Complex, which has had a great impact on other buildings ever since, and yet he never thought of moving out of the humble Topkapı Palace. That is, it never dawned on him to get his master architect Sinan to design an immense and ornate palace. Even the well-heeled grand viziers of that huge empire went without a renowned palace or mansion, and here I mean

Süleyman's son-in-law Rüstem Pasha, *Dama[1]9t* or Şehit (martyr) Sokullu Mehmet Pasha- -the successor of Rüstem who served as grand vizier for the longest period - and Sokullu Mehmet Pasha's successor *Damat* Siyavu Pasha. In any case it would have been impossible for these viziers to enjoy such a residence, as it was a custom for any damat to move to the palace or mansion of the sultan's daughter, sister or wife. Today, however, almost nothing is left of these palaces and mansions. Esma Sultan, daughter of Sultan Abdulaziz I and a very colourful character herself, had a palace next to the Bosphorus, but it has survived only in name; the hotel standing where it used to be has no relation with the former palace whatsoever.

As for the palaces of ambassadors in Istanbul, they seem almost to have been deliberately designed to poke fun at the modesty of the places where the Ottoman elite resided, particularly in the nineteenth century. One thinks, for example, of the renowned British Embassy in Tepeba, the so-called 'Palais de France', and the famed 'Venetian Palace' dating back to the sixteenth century, which had been the location of the Venetian embassy before it was transformed into the Austro-Hungarian Embassy. I should also mention the famous Italian embassy building in Maçka, which was built in the early twentieth century, after the Ottomans had established a relationship with this newly emerging Italian nation, another great state, in the previous century. The building was never used as an embassy and now serves as an art school. Looking at these buildings, one cannot help but recognise that they were superior to any vizier's mansion or grand vizier's residence. The only matter of controversy when it comes to the official residences of the Ottoman court is whether their modesty derived from a sense of morality or from financial exigency.



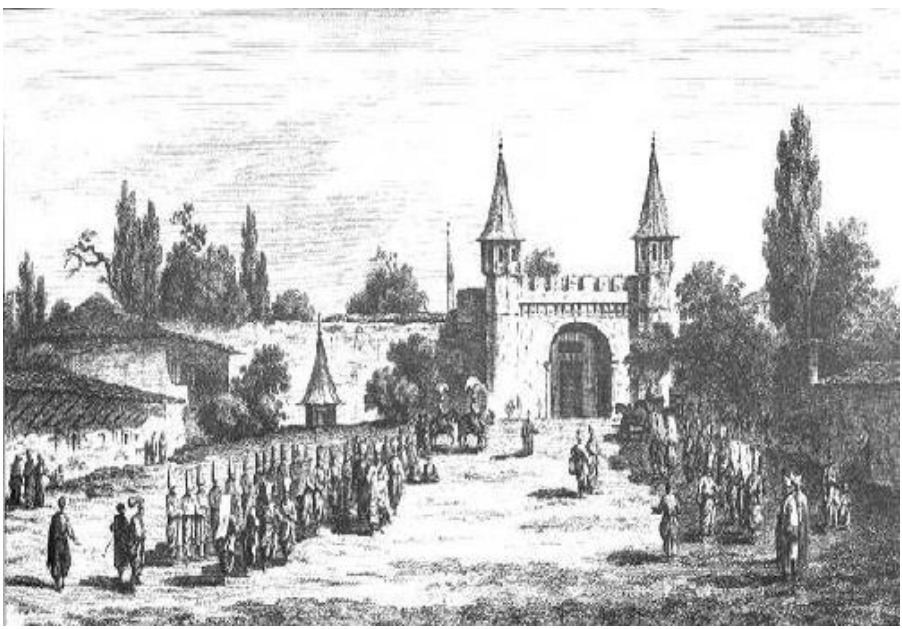
In the nineteenth century, it was not just the residences of viziers and grand-viziers in the Ottoman capital that were no match for the immense embassy palaces there. A merchant or industrialist would not have possessed such a home either. The only Ottoman residences that go some way towards offsetting the elaborate embassy buildings were the lavish villas, pavilions and mansions commissioned by the wealthy Hıdiv family, who brought the great wealth of Egypt back to Istanbul. The famed mansion of Hıdıv Abbas Hilmi Pasha in Çubuklu (on the Asian side of Istanbul), which is now the property of the local municipality, was one of a handful of exceptionally sumptuous residences in Istanbul, other examples being Sait Halim Pasha's palace in Bebek (a district on the European side of Istanbul), now used as the Egyptian Consulate General, and the wooden mansion of the same pasha in nearby Yeniköy, which unfortunately burned down. The Ministry of Culture has restored the mansion of one Kayserili Ahmet Pasha, located in Süleymaniye, which was the subject of much rumour when it was first built to accommodate the Admiralty. But if you go and visit this mansion, you will see how humble and inferior it is compared to the mansions of the elite in Egypt. The wealth we observe in Istanbul cannot be compared with that of either Cairo or Alexandria.

The riches of nineteenth and twentieth century Russia likewise surpassed those of the Ottoman Empire. The renowned Turkish novelist Midhat Cemal Kuntay encapsulates this contrast very effectively in his novel *Üç İstanbul* (Three Istanbuls). In the eyes of one

character, a Russian prince who has fled to Istanbul during the revolution, the marbled villa belonging to the allegedly criminal and corrupt chief of the Admiralty under Abdulhamit II is nothing special. For him, in fact, it does not even warrant comparison with the properties that the Russian aristocrats have left behind in Russia.

Another topic we need to deal with is the distinct character, style and traditions of the Topkapı Palace. All things considered, the Palace was a kind of family home for the Ottoman Empire, the ultimate source of its tradition. Even if a sultan did not live in Topkapıı, once he died his coffin was buried in its grounds; imperial circumcisions, of course, were carried out in the Palace too. The Palace possessed a tradition all of its own, and we really should know how life proceeded within it. We should not forget, moreover, that the Ottoman conception of the state screams at us from every section, every corner of the palace.

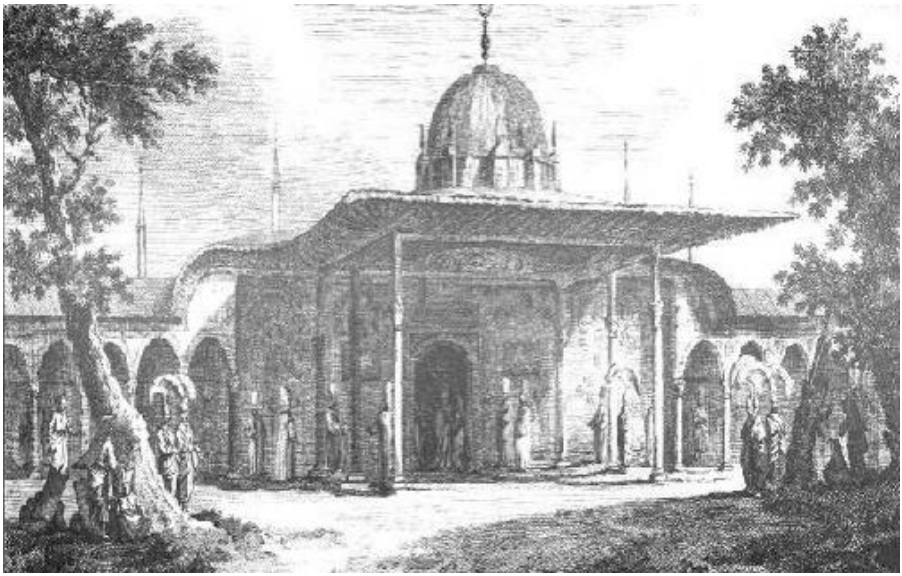
Until the nineteenth century, the Topkapıı Palace was the home of the state. It was located at the most beautiful point on earth, on the tip of the promontory known as 'Sarayburnu' (palace point) and could be seen from every part of the city. The palace was not constructed in just one period but rather evolved as a result of additions made in the course of time. Despite this, each part of the palace appears to complement the others. What is also clear is that there existed a certain tripartite harmony between Topkapı, Sultanahmet Mosque and Hagia Sophia, and the Palace played a crucial role in engendering this harmony and thereby adding to the beauty of this historical area.



When Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror entered the city and saw the condition of the palace of the Byzantine kaisers, he is said to have recited a couplet, which is still the subject of debate, as is the identity of the original author:

Bum nevbet mizened der tarem-i Afrasyвb
Perdedaro mikoned der kasr- kayzer ankebud.
[The owl sounds the relief in the castle of Afrasiyab
The spider is curtain-bearer in the palace of the kaiser]

The couplet tells us that the owl sounds the relief, that is, acts like a brass band, in the (desolate) palace of the great Persian emperor Afrasiyab. This must be related to the fact that emperors had bands who would sound the relief, and these were stationed in front of their palaces, one example being the Ottoman janissary Mehter Corps. The second line informs us that, in the palace of the kaisers, the role of curtain-bearer, namely that of the chief of protocol, was taken by spiders. Both of these, of course, are bitter images of decline, although the Topkapı Palace never actually sunk to the level they evoke. During the Republican era, the Palace, which was in ruins, was restored and conservation measures taken. Today, unfortunately, it is facing a concerted attack from tourism. It is abundantly clear that some of the artefacts in the Ottoman palace need to be moved to a national museum, which should be established as soon as possible. At the same time, we have to preserve Topkapı, where Ottoman rulers resided until the nineteenth century and which they maintained thereafter as a centre of ritual and spirituality. This is why the rituals that existed there earlier have been upheld. For instance, the custom of reciting the Koran for twenty-four hours in the Sacred Relics Section was maintained throughout the Republican Era and continues to be practised today.



For all the modesty and demise of the Topkapı Palace, it nonetheless communicates to us Ottoman civilisation in all its splendiferousness. The Imperial Gate (Bab-ı Hümayun) is being restored, as a gate offering access to a state deserves to be. The importance of the palace's gates is embodied in the name that the public coined for the palace: Topkapı literally means 'Cannon Gate', and this name was chosen because the palace had cannons in front of its gates. The 'Gate of Salutation' (Babüsselвm) is no more no less than an entrance expressing respect for the state. Everybody, including even the grand vizier, would dismount from their horses when entering through this gate, where the museum's ticket office is now located. The dome that they would see at the edge of the courtyard into which the gate leads is supposed to stand for the universal character of the Empire. Visible from any part of Istanbul, it has been given various names, such as the Tower of Justice (Kasr-I Adl). This is where the so-called 'dome viziers' (*Kubbealti vüzerası*), essentially the cabinet that governed the state, would hear appeals on Fridays. This is also where the janissaries would be presented with their salaries every three months, an event which was attended by the foreign ambassadors in the capital and which featured deafening yelling on the part of the janissaries.

Today, the imperial kitchen boasts an incomparable collection of Chinese porcelain. Even in the nineteenth century, the kitchen of the Ottoman Palace was not just the embodiment of elegance and affluence but also a place which produced abundant food for distribution to the area around the palace. Finally, I should mention the Harem, an institution where the aristocracy was not in

evidence but where the *devşirme* system was in force. It was like the female equivalent of the Enderun where, we will remember, people from the lowest strata of society and from distant villages governed by the state were trained to be top-notch administrators. In this way, an elite composed of both women and men was created and educated. Among these girls in the Harem there were some who learned Turkish very well, such as Hürrem Sultan, the future wife of Süleyman the Magnificent. The Harem certainly had its own hierarchy, as does every institution in every country on our planet.

The Enderun, which we tend simply to call a school, was actually an educational system with a protocol determined by the state. All the various units within the Palace, such as the treasury, the kitchens, the 'outer' and 'inner' dormitories, and the vegetable and flower gardens in the area extending down to the sea (an area now occupied by the railway line) had their own customs and their own particular institutional statuses. For instance, the Palace was responsible for the security of the coastline in Istanbul, and this was maintained in practice by the Corps of Gardeners (*Bostancılar Ocağı*). Different military units within the Palace, such as the *Sipahi* and *Kapıkulu* cavalry corps, elements of the so-called 'Six Divisions of Cavalry' (*Altı Bölük Halkı*), were charged with guarding and defending Istanbul and the Palace.

Like all communities and groups of people, palaces eventually hand over their responsibilities to other institutions. And so it was with Topkapı. This Ottoman palace, dating back to the Classical Age, performed the function which the modern system of states that prevailed in the nineteenth century accorded to it, namely to be the residence of a great empire. Once it had fulfilled this function, though, it had no choice but to cede its responsibilities to others.

ULEMA NEIGHBOURHOODS IN ISTANBUL

Together with Vezneciler, Zeynep, Fatih and Fatih Çarambas, the Istanbul districts of Süleymaniye and Vefa, which might be thought of as constituting the centre of the city, can be termed the '*ulema* neighbourhoods of Istanbul', meaning the neighbourhoods of Istanbul inhabited by Muslim scholars. The reason is this: in the environs of Fatih Mosque, located in this part of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror established what was supposed to be the highest educational institution, Sahn-ı Seman, meaning 'eight auditoria'.

Graduates from this school went on to obtain the prestigious Istanbul *Ruusu* qualification after they had attended one of the (higher level) Süleymaniye medreses that Süleyman the Magnificent had established in the sixteenth century close to the Süleymaniye Mosque.

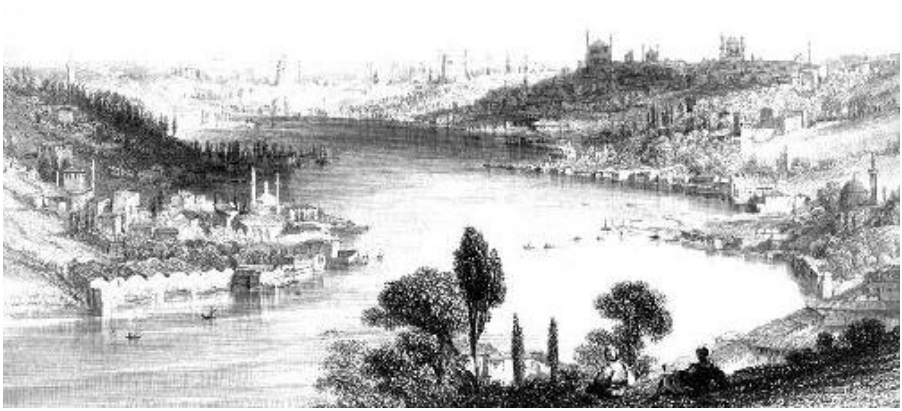
Possessing the Istanbul *Ruusu* was vital for a man who intended to become a fully-fledged *kadı* or *müderris* in the empire, or to acquire a position as a mufti. Those unable to pass the exam and attain the Istanbul *Ruusu* were not really considered educated and well-mannered, unlike people who came from medreses. Life in this area of Ottoman Istanbul was geared towards learning. Students ate, worked and slept in the medrese. Some *müderrises* went to medreses to give lecturers, and on those days students and other interested parties would flock to the grand mosque to listen to them.

Interestingly, the major educational reforms undertaken in nineteenth century Turkey aimed at undermining the medreses and creating an education system that bypassed them. Yet the alternative institutions that were set up still remained in the same area of Istanbul. Some schools that would later constitute the *Darülfünun* (House of Multiple Sciences) were established here, as were institutions of secondary education such as the Fener Men's Grammar School and the *Darüşşafaka* Foundation. Even the *ulema* themselves formed a new institution to help them adapt to the reformed legal environment, with all its new legislation. Interestingly, this modern medrese for *kadıs*, known as *Medresetü'l Kudat* and *Mekteb-i Nüvvab*, was more Western-oriented and inclined towards the Roman legal system than the modern law schools. This school, moreover, offered for the first time a fixed course schedule, in contrast to the arbitrary arrangement of classes in the medreses, based on the whims of the müderrises. Many of twentieth century Turkey's jurists would emerge from the *Medresetü'l Kudat*.

The history of these *ulema* neighbourhoods is tied up with the cultural history of the empire as a whole. To begin with, the Turkish spoken in this area is the accent that we can truly call Istanbul Turkish. I sometimes heard this accent in my childhood, spoken for example by elderly and well-mannered Istanbul ladies who had not had a formal education, that is, not gone to grammar school or university. Had they gone, it would have been impossible for them to retain this accent. These ladies said, for instance, 'gelcak Perşenbe' (pronounced 'geljak pairshenbay', meaning 'next Thursday') instead of the usual 'gelecek Perşembe' (pronounced 'gelejek pairshembay' and pronounced some 'i's as 'ü's. They spoke clearly and with a correct syntax, arguing that if they did not do so, uneducated people would not be able to understand them. It could be said that their vocabularies contained a larger share of Arabic and Persian terms than is the case with teachers and students at universities today. These, in short, were the locals, and they lived in these neighbourhoods alongside the members of medreses, imams, and high-ranked bureaucrats. It did not matter whether one was rich or poor. Some of

the old streets from that era, which I can remember from my childhood, are still there, and you can find pictures of them in photograph archives. One photo, for example, shows a mansion standing next to a one-and-a-half-storey wooden house, which is on the verge of collapse. Those who would like to observe interesting topographies of this kind can do so today in the districts close to Karagümrük, in other words, in the vicinity of the *Hırka-i Saadet*, the scared relics section in the Topkapı Palace.

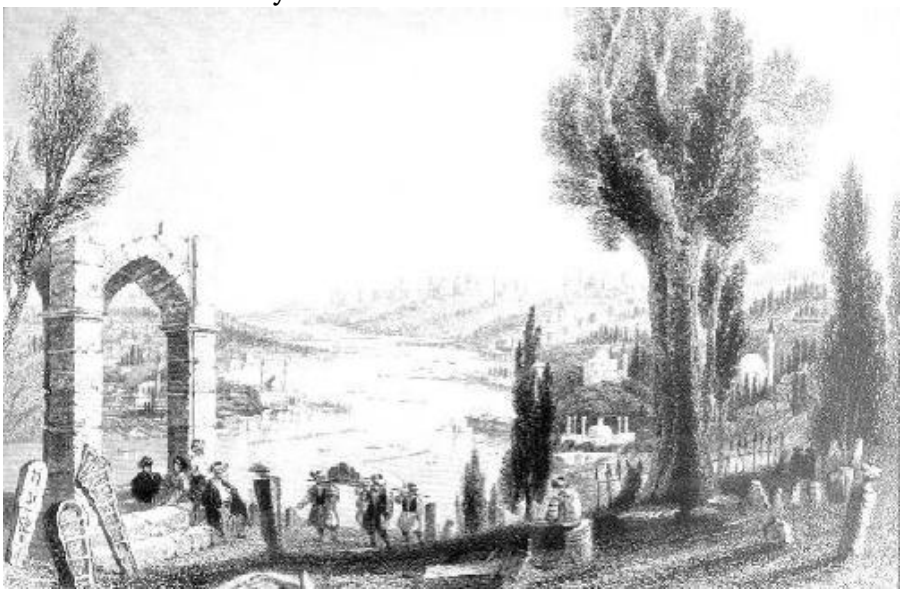
At Fatih Mosque, funerals would be held for grand viziers who died on duty. Their graves, as well as those of a number of important scholars, can be found in this graveyard. Also buried there under a tombstone in the form of a circular column is the Ottoman statesman and historian Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, the first Minister of Justice of the Ottoman Empire, who deserves the accolade 'the first and last sun' to emerge from the medreses of the nineteenth century. This type of tombstone attracted the Austrian orientalist Hammer so much that he had his grave in Klosterneuburg near Vienna designed in the same way. Like Ahmet Cevdet Pasha's, his is a cylindrical tombstone, on which is written the Arabic text 'Hüvelbaki, müverrih ve mütercim-i elsine-i selase Yusuf bin Hammer' (Only Allah will remain. Here lies Hammer, son of Joseph, historian and translator of three languages). As far as I remember, there is no cross on it. It is a tombstone in an entirely oriental style, extremely modest and totally lacking the ostentation or bad taste we encounter today. There is a remarkably melancholic atmosphere in Fatih Mosque. It makes you feel the way you do when you go to a graveyard and see the tombstones of young girls, young brides and middle-aged women, all covered in flowers. And it resembles the feeling you get when you see the gravestones of sheikhs or members of a sect, giving you the sensation that you are in the middle of a dervish lodge.



The district of Fatih was the epicentre of Ottoman literature but also an area bubbling with student gossip and dissent. In history we find cases of medrese uprisings and incidents connected with this or that mullah in this or that mosque. In the seventeenth century, a group named the *Kadı*zadelis, led for some time by Üstüvani Mehmet Efendi, proclaimed almost everything to be *bid'ah* (unwanted innovation in religion) and thus forbidden, a practice followed by the Wahhabis in present-day Saudi Arabia. For instance, it was forbidden to intone the *kamet*, the words announcing that prayer was about to begin in a mosque. However, what makes Istanbul mosques so special is the high-quality renditions of the *kamets* by the muezzins; they perform with such beautiful voices and such wonderful melodies that they manage to entice the more elegant Istanbulites, who are bound to attend bigger mosques. I have even heard of an occasion when a muezzin intoned *kamet* so beautifully that the prostrate worshippers prolonged the 'ala' part of 'Sübhane rabbiyel ala' (Glory to my Lord, the most high), effectively complimenting the muezzin out loud. The *Kadı*zadelis tried to forbid delights like these, declaring them *bid'ah*. Understandably, this turned into a political issue and precipitated a fair amount of anarchy.

The next day, Köprülü Mehmet Pasha sent the janissaries over to the *Kadı*zadelis to give them a good beating. Üstüvani Efendi was exiled to Cyprus. In fact, as far as the state was concerned, people were free to act this way and to argue as much as they wanted; but when they tried to undermine the political and social order, they

knew the answer they would receive.



You can see the dignified nature of the Ottoman state reflected in an interesting way if you pay a visit to the location of the Süleymaniye Medreses. The area is full of beautiful *ulema* mansions, high buildings called *fevkani*, which are inhabited by single and migrant workers and which have unfortunately been left to collapse. Despite our half-hearted conservation measures, even today these buildings are still standing. You can sense the style in them; but look at how indifferent today's state and society are. And this is despite the fact that, in Turkey, the prominent families that represent any great culture are a good deal richer than similar families abroad.

If 1 km2 were removed from Florence, a city in a country that we regard as cultured, what would remain of that great Italian Renaissance? What would happen if 2 km2 of Rome were destroyed and the city left it to its own resources? What, I wonder, would remain of Italy's Renaissance or Baroque heritage? Or what would happen if they abandoned 2 km2 of Parisian land or if, as has happened in Istanbul, they built a Swiss Hotel right behind the Louvre, on the banks of the River Seine, such as in Marais or St. Michel? Would that pompous culture of France in the time of Louis XIV remain? What would be left of old Russia if the same thing happened in Moscow, or St. Petersburg? Unfortunately, today's Turkey has abandoned a 2km2 area consisting of Süleymaniye, Vefa, Zeyrek and Fatih Çarşambas, leaving these areas to fend for themself.

The historical topography of this area needs to be protected, as does the local population. In some way, we should preserve old

Istanbul, and through financial support we ought to encourage those generations that will pass that culture on to those after them to carry on living there. One solution would be to form new university societies there; however, no less an institution than Istanbul University has managed to destroy the character and life of the area by putting up such ugly buildings. This has all happened in the last thirty years, and because of such overzealousness, the centre of Istanbul is disappearing day by day. This is an outrage. The neighbourhood we are talking about is one in which every single column, stone, and inscription tells a story.

When you pass through Kirazlı Mescit (masjid) Street, you will see that it has been left to its own resources. When you enter the graveyard of the masjid, so numerous are the graves of the officials and clerks of the Sublime Porte that you would be forgiven for thinking that you have trespassed upon a meeting in the central hall of the Topkapıı Palace. But these great Ottomans have been left to fend for themselves, and restoration work has not been carried out well.

The office of the Mufti in Istanbul today used to be the office of the *Sheikh ul-Islam*, and before that it served as the headquarters of the janissaries. This building, known as 'Ağa Kapısı' (literally, 'The Gate of the Agha') was in some senses the Ministry of War or the office of the Chief of General Staff. After the Janissary Corps was abolished, this location was handed over to *Sheikh ul-Islam*, which had previously not had a building of its own. An inscription on this building is very interesting. It reads 'Bab-ı fitneydi. Hak kld makam-ifta' (It was the gate of discord. However, Allah turned it into the office of fatwa), indicating that the inscription was placed there after a historical incident, namely the abolition of the Janissary Corps in 1826 (1240 in the Ottoman-Rumi calendar).

When you enter through the gate and turn right, in the corner you will see the modest tomb of the great man who left his mark on the empire that adorned the world, and who let it be known through his work that this empire was a true empire, spanning three continents. This simple tomb resembling a small chess pawn belongs to Sinan the Master Architect. And when you enter the graveyard of Süleymaniye Mosque, you will see that the tombs of two great emperors who conquered many a country, Süleyman the Magnificent and - a few kilometres away - Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan, are modest beyond belief.

We do not look after the historical mosques or tombs located within Istanbul's ancient city walls. We have left them to their own resources. We did not raise our voices when buildings were constructed willy-nilly and when the headquarters of organisations

were located in this historical district. Could no other room be found in this huge city of Istanbul for the headquarters of the Social Security Administration or the Turkish Central Bank? We have not given much thought to the potential consequences of such negligence, just setting up this and that institute here or there. We have built unnecessary offices for Istanbul University's most inactive institutions. And we have paid no attention to the historical monuments in the vicinity of the more modern buildings, monuments which it is our duty to protect.

One of them is Kilise Camii (Church Mosque), a church dating to the last Byzantine dynasty, which was converted very successfully into a mosque. A few metres away from this is Atf Efendi Library, a milestone in our cultural history in every way. Yet we have done nothing to take control of the housing in, and construction of, the street where these buildings are located, and the street is now overflowing with workshops. A huge brick building is being put up near the base of the Valens aqueduct in Kovaclar Avenue. What right do we have to erect these ugly buildings, to condone this construction? And as if that were not enough, a neighbourhood of poverty has been allowed to take root here. 'Neighbourhoods of poverty' are what we can term places like these, areas where people stay for a day or two and then move on, areas inhabited by migrant and single workers (as opposed to families) or by members of the population who do not contribute to the production process and just lead a subsistence living. 'Neighbourhoods of poverty' is not a rhetorical expression intended to humiliate; it is a sociological term. As you would expect, the area is overflowing with rubbish, and what makes it even worse is that it is the location of the tomb of Sheikh Vefa. This is also where you can still purchase authentic *Vefa boza* (a fermented beverage), one of our historical institutions that is struggling to survive. The same people who produce boza in the winter switch in the summer to making and selling *şıra* (slightly fermented grape juice). But many Istanbulites are not familiar with this area, so they miss out on those delicacies.

The 2.5km2 neighbourhood that appears to have been earmarked for destruction just happens to be the very centre of the empire, history and culture of the Turks. To appreciate the tragedy of this situation, go and stand near the Fatih Mosque or next to the Valens aqueduct. In the distance, on one side you will see the Şehzadeba Mosque, while in line with it, on the right you will see the Süleymaniye Mosque. As if with a ruler, Sinan the Architect ornamented the city using these great mosques as reference points, the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque of course looming in the background. Even in my childhood, in the Istanbul where high ugly buildings had

not yet been erected, it was possible to walk from one mosque to another down wide streets. It was possible to see three or four of these mosques lined up. It was a magnificent Istanbul, a masterpiece built from stone and adorned with trees.

Even when we were restoring Istanbul, we paid no attention to geometry. But it is time that we do pay attention to it, because we cannot afford to turn our backs on this heritage, a point that I cannot stress enough. Even in the countries that we consider to be the most cultured, nobody can enjoy the luxury of sacrificing a few square metres. The moment they do this, their nation is doomed.

THE OTTOMAN SULTANS

The dynasties of other nations have been the subject of very comprehensive monographs. Ivan Zabelin, a prominent expert on Russian history, for example, immortalised the short-lived Romanov dynasty and the Rurik dynasty that preceded it in his weighty tomes *The Everyday Life of Russian Tsars*, followed by *The Everyday Life of Russian Tsarinas*, and finally *The Everyday Life of Russian Tsarevitches*.

The archive of the Topkapıı Palace contains countless documents, some of which provide us with more information than do the documents stored in the palaces of Europe. So detailed are these sources that it would be possible, as well as very amusing, for example, to prepare a monograph comparing the fifty or sixty varieties of food that were prepared for a sultan on any given day with the French palace cuisine during the reign of Louis XIV. Also included in the chronicles written on the order of the sultans were statistics concerning daily palace expenditure, information about the palace hierarchy, and minutiae of the daily lives of the Ottoman emperors. Very interesting data about the palace and the sultans can be gleaned too from texts by ambassadors and foreign travellers to the Ottoman capital.

Who exactly were the Ottoman sultans, and how did they live? In answer to the first question, we can say that the Ottoman sultans were descendents of an old dynasty. In fact, only two dynasties in the Islamic world have lasted so long. The Ottoman one, which survives even to this day, is said to have originated from Ouz Khan, but in all probability dates back to Osman Gazi and his father Gündüz Alp. (It is often claimed that Gündüz Alp was one and the same as Erturul Gazi.) What we do know is that this dynasty lasted seven centuries. The only other Islamic dynasty to have lasted so long is the line of ruling houses that stretched back to Genghis Khan and continued with the Crimean, Khazan and Astrakhan Khanates.

In the course of the first one hundred and fifty years of the reign of the Ottoman ruling house, the principle came to be adopted

that the sons of the sultan, in other words the candidates for the throne, would marry the daughters of the rulers of surrounding sultanates. When Beyazd II, the son of Murat I, wedded the daughter of the beylik of Germiyan, which had its capital at Kütahya in Western Turkey, the generous dowry that the Ottoman sultanate received was the incorporation of Germiyan into its own territory. It is quite clear that Orhan Gazi's marriage to the daughter of the Byzantine emperor *Cantacuzinos* meant that noble blue blood was being introduced into the Ottoman dynasty, a matter of great importance in the eyes of the Christian world. As was noted earlier, Uzun Hasan of the Akkoyunlu dynasty chose to establish kinship with the Comnene dynasty, the emperors of the Trebizond-*Rum* Empire.

Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan married Hafsa Sultan, the daughter of Mengli Geray. Although one Turkish historian, Çağatay Uluçay, has raised legitimate doubts concerning Hafsa Sultan's ancestry, the generally accepted position is that Hafsa Sultan, the mother of Süleyman the Magnificent, was the daughter of a Crimean Khan. Here we see a point where the legendary Ottoman and Genghis family lines actually intersected.

From this time on, the Ottoman court would be a home not to blue-blooded princesses but to beautiful and intelligent women. And the woman whom we can term the matriarch of this whole dynasty was the mysterious figure of Hürrem Sultan, otherwise known as Roxelana, purported to be the daughter of a pastor from the region of Galicia in western Ukraine.

While Hürrem Sultan was never the *valide sultan*, that is, the mother of the incumbent sultan, she was assigned the status of mother of the sultan's children. She was remembered in both Istanbul and Jerusalem for her various charitable activities. Furthermore, she was very interested in poetry and certainly had a way with words. Although her correspondence with Süleyman the Magnificent deserves a place in the history of Turkish literature, nobody appears to take the time and effort to engage with her works and teach the next generation about them.

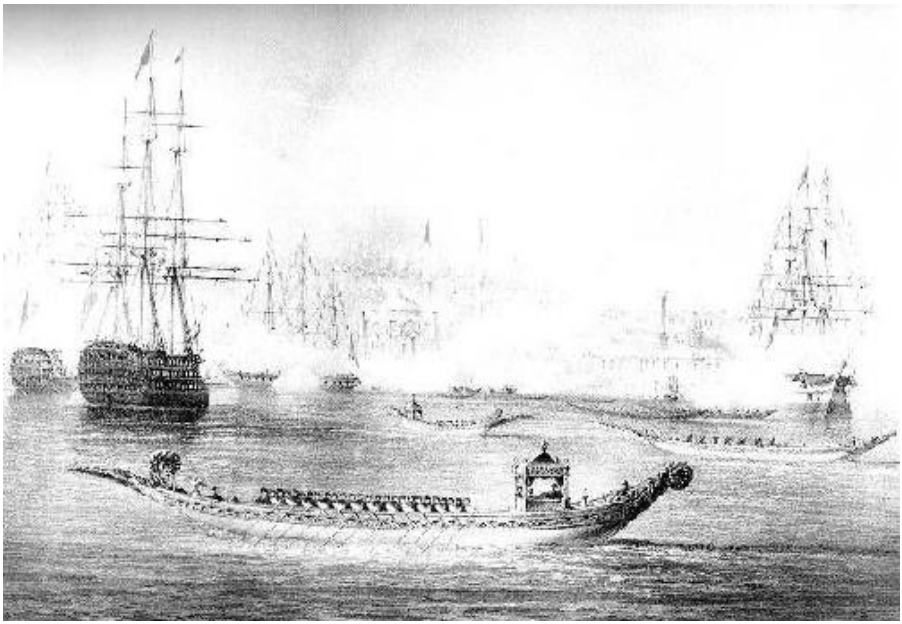
The second leading matriarch of the dynasty was Hatice Turhan Sultan, the wife of Sultan Ibrahim I. Under no circumstances should we forget Kösem Mahpeyker Sultan, wife of Ahmet I, mother of Murat IV and Ibrahim I, and grandmother of Mehmet IV, the latter relationship gaining her the title of 'grand *valide*'. This said, we do not know for sure the birthplace of this mother to such great rulers, who played a dominant role in the Ottoman harem for a remarkably long time, and the origins of Hürrem Sultan and other *valide sultans* are likewise a good deal less certain than those of the male sultans. We do know, though, that the mothers within the Ottoman dynasty were

granted the title of ‘sultan’, whereas this was never the case with hasekis[2]0.

The Ottoman sultan had to follow a very strict routine when it came to his daily activities. Even where he would sit in the palace after he had left the Harem in the morning, whether that be the Revan Kiosk, the Baghdad Kiosk, the Audience Chamber (*Arz Odası*), the library built on the orders of Ahmet III, or similar places in the Enderun, was fixed. So many things were determined in advance: what his daily schedule would be, which Enderun aghas he would meet with, and even when he would have lunch; because of his early breakfast, this was at 11 o’clock.

Where the meal would be prepared and how it would be delivered were also fixed. After the reign of Beyazıd II, the palace began to use porcelain crockery, which explains the existence of such a rich porcelain collection at Topkapıı. The following arrangement was thought up to deal with the tasting of food: first the cooks would taste it themselves and after them the food would be tried by special servants whose duty it was to thwart any attempt at poisoning and assassination. Although sixty varieties of food were prepared for the sultan, he would not of course eat all of them, sometimes merely taking a look and at other times just tasting them. In keeping with an old Eastern and Turkish tradition, what he did not eat was apparently eaten by others after him, the order being determined by protocol. At night, the sultan would retire to the Harem. What would go on there, and which concubine he would sleep with, and under what conditions, would again be determined on the basis of an official procedure.

All of the sultans had ability in one or more crafts and possessed knowledge about science. We do not know exactly which craft every sultan specialized in, but they all had a certain profession. At the same time as being the ruler of a huge empire, Süleyman the Magnificent was a very skilful and dexterous jeweller. For that reason, from time to time exquisite pieces of jewellery were brought to Istanbul from foreign cities such as Venice, to be perused by the extremely discriminating emperor. One such example was a crown from Venice, on which Prof. Gülrü Neciboğlu has written a monograph which brings out the sultan’s fascination with the art of the Renaissance. Süleyman himself was a very competent artist.



The sultans had very interesting talents. Murat III was a poet with an extremely impressive and lengthy divan, that is, collection of his own courtly poetry. This padishah's taste in fine fabrics indicates that he had a keen interest in this field or at least in the art of book illumination. As for Murat IV, he was a great sportsman. This outstanding seventeenth century military commander could himself wield a heavy mace and was an accomplished archer, yet he was also an expert in art forms we would not associate with such a hulk: he was a stylish writer, with very elegant handwriting, and possessed knowledge of, and a love for, poetry and music.

Mehmet IV was famous for his huntsmanship and spent much of his time hunting. (Of course, in order to be a good hunter, he also had to be a good sportsman, which he was.) Hunting was an integral part of Ottoman political and daily life.

Like Murat IV, Ahmet III was a notable calligrapher. Selim III was such a talented and prolific composer that one could almost go so far as to call him a part-time sultan. His successor, Mahmud II, was both a calligrapher with a particularly original style and an accomplished composer, albeit not of the same calibre as his uncle Selim.

All the evidence shows that Abdülhamit II was a master carpenter who, had he not been a sultan, could have become extremely rich from plying his trade. It would be no exaggeration to say that his designs were unrivalled. For proof of this, one can go and examine examples of his craftsmanship still on display in Istanbul: some cabinets he made, which today are used to store court records at

the office of the Provincial Director of Religious Affairs for Istanbul; some tables in Topkapı; a bookcase in Istanbul University; and some items in a certain section of the Yldz Palace which can be regarded as the first step in the development of a city museum.

Turning to Abdülmecid Han, he was a modern painter and a composer very much in a European vein. His polished compositions are only coming to light today. Sultan Abdülaziz Khan, whom historiographers have mistakenly portrayed exclusively as a wrestler and a man who liked to eat lamb, was also a highly talented painter. What is more, he was a proficient composer, whose works in both Turkish and European styles have had an impact on audiences.

Murat V was a very proficient pianist, composer and painter. Seyfeddin Efendi, one of the sons of Sultan Abdülaziz, had a particularly interesting occupation: this portly prince would run up and down the narrow stairs of a mosque's minarets at considerable speed and hang between the two minarets the *mahyas*[21] prepared for the holy month of Ramadan . As well as being an almost legendary practitioner of this skill, he too was a talented composer, whose pieces are still listened to with pleasure.

As we have seen, the Ottoman sultans possessed a range of interesting talents, but they lived in a quite modest palace and were members of a community governed by a protocol that lasted a very long time. It was only in the nineteenth century that this protocol underwent some change, partial at that. Indicative of the fixedness of life in the Palace is the fact that circumcisions of sultans always occurred in a pre-assigned place. This was either the circumcision room or the sacred relics section of the Palace, which are actually next door to each other. The convention of performing circumcisions in a preordained location was maintained after the move to the Dolmabahçe Palace.

When a sultan or ehzade died, he was transported to Topkapıı and washed and enshrouded according to Islamic rites in the sacred relics section. The corpse ready for burial would be taken from that room. Sultans were always obliged to visit this palace and, until the collapse of the empire, the private treasure of the imperial family was kept in the Topkapıı Palace. In other words, all the priceless items that we see on display today had always been in the same place.

The main ceremony where sultans came into contact with the public was that of the presentation of swords. This can be seen as an alternative to coronation, which was not a part of the Ottoman state tradition. The reign of a sultan was judged to have been initiated in Eyüp Sultan when the sultan was girded with a sword either by the sublime sheikhs of the Mevlevi sect, to which members of the dynasty belonged, or by a high religious official known as the nakibü'l eraf. In

reality, of course, the sultan would already have seen the corpse and coffin of his predecessor and then sat on his golden throne, which would have been placed in front of the Gate of Felicity in the Topkapı Palace. At that moment, state officials would pay homage to him. The town criers would announce the accession of the new sultan in every corner of the empire by declaring, for instance, 'The country and the millet belong to Sultan Ibrahim (or Süleyman, etc.) Khan'. This ceremony and tradition never changed.

Even the last sultan, Vahdettin Khan, took his place on the golden throne in front of the Gate of Felicity and received those paying homage. The only breaks with this tradition occurred when Hüseyin Avni Pasha launched a successful coup in favour of Murat V, for whom he would serve as Minister of War, and when, in the wake of the so-called '31st March Incident' of 1909[22], members of the *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress) paid extremely rushed homage to their favoured Sultan Read in the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezareti*).

Every Friday, the sultan would attend Friday prayers in one of the mosques of Istanbul, a tradition known as *selamlık*. The *alkış* (literally meaning applause) that is mentioned in descriptions of this ceremony does not actually mean hand-clapping but refers to the activity of those who saw the sultan passing by: they would call out 'My sultan, do not be proud, as Allah is greater than you.' The pageantry surrounding *selamlık* was of great importance. As was mentioned earlier, in the Classical Age of Ottoman rule some complaints from members of the public were written down and placed in a pouch attached to the stirrup of the sultan. These petitions in Turkish and other languages, which are among the most valuable documents to be found in the Ottoman archives, would be collected by an official and they were dealt with seriously. Sometimes very interesting petitions emerged from the pouches, which were handed over to the *Rikab-ı Hümayun*[23].

The communication between the sultan and his grand vizier took the form of letters known as t*elhises.* These *telhises*, issued by the office of the grand vizier, are invaluable sources on the administrative and political life of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman sultans had very different personalities. Beyazid I, for instance, was something of an intellectual. Mehmet I, on the other hand, was a very cunning and tight-lipped ruler. This is how he managed to defeat his brothers during the *Fetret devri* (the period of power vacuum in the early fifteenth century) and was able to retake certain areas of Ottoman territory. Murat II was deeply interested in Eastern literature and books on politics. Major translations were produced during his reign. Mehmet the Conqueror brought

enlightenment to his own age and was viewed with astonishment, even envy, by everyone. As he has already been portrayed at some length in Chapter Eight, little more needs to be said about his talent for languages and his profound knowledge of history.

Mehmet the Conqueror, however, was not the only sultan who spoke foreign languages. Şehzade Ahmet, the brother of Yavuz Sultan Selim, had such extensive knowledge of Arabic and politics that he was able to write a book in Arabic about politics! Selim I himself was very familiar with the Persian language and its poetry. Süleyman the Magnificent was an extremely prolific reader and an insightful interpreter of poetry.

Yavuz Sultan Selim was extremely irritable. Above all, he could not bear lying. This, in fact, was quite normal among the sultans. As soon as it became clear that a vizier had lied, he would be beheaded. Deception was regarded as the form of behaviour that posed the greatest threat to the state and its security, and was unforgivable in a statesman. There seem to have been very few exceptions to this rule, and only a handful of alleged liars were spared execution. None, however, avoided the ban on involvement in politics that followed exposure as a liar. To be sure, among these victims were some entirely innocent statesmen; however, the key to survival in this dynasty was to combine one's virtues with success and not to be too hasty in saying what one thought about political matters. Even hotheads like Yavuz Sultan Selim hid their feelings.

This was a feature peculiar to the Ottoman dynasty. Throughout the whole lifetime of the sultanate, nobody dared to replace this dynasty with another. The dynasty also had its own special ways of handling public relations. Furthermore, it helped to generate a string of accomplished marshals as well as providing opportunities for numerous artists of merit. The unique merits of the Ottoman dynasty enabled the nation and state to reach the pinnacle of their prosperity and power and to adjust to the industrial age; its unique faults, however, led to its own collapse.

THE OTTOMAN PASHAS

The Ottoman Empire was governed by its pashas. The word 'pasha' requires further explanation. Two etymologies have been proposed for it, one being the Persian 'Pa-i Shah', denoting 'foot of the shah', the other being the Turkish 'baaa', or 'chief agha'. The latter etymology has found most acceptance.

Pashas would begin from the rank of *Mirliva*, meaning that they were the military commanders of the Turkish community, the equivalent of today's brigadier generals. These commanders were in charge of the sanjaks, which correspond roughly to the smaller *vilayets*

(provinces) of today's Turkey. In other words, they were military men and members of the military class but also had administrative duties.

Until the nineteenth century, no distinction was made within the Ottoman administrative system between soldiers and civilians or between military and civil service. Certain high-ranking officials were deemed to be the beylerbeys of Anatolia and Rumelia. These were commanders above the rank of sanjakbey, governors of provinces (*eyalets*), the pashas based in the Palace who attended the Imperial Council in their capacities as first, second or third vizier, and the Admiral of the Fleet, who had the status of both vizier and marshal. This was the general structure of the state elite, although there were undoubtedly some exceptional cases. Until the nineteenth century, the commanders ruling the *vilayets*, the boundaries of which were larger than those of the *vilayets* of modern Turkey, had more the status of military men than they did of civilian administrations but they carried out both military and civilian duties.

The Admiral of the Fleet, a grand commander holding the rank of vizier, sat on the Imperial Council. At times when the treasury was not in a position to make emergency payments, the admiral had to be able to cover the expenses of shipbuilding and to take care of the shipyards from his own pocket, but he also needed to be a dynamic and effective leader. Knowledge of seamanship was not a vital prerequisite for the post. As examples of this, we may remember that Mahmud Şevket Pasha (one of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror's grand viziers) and Mehmet Pasha Sokolovic proved as able sea dogs as the other naval commanders, despite the fact that they had not been especially educated for navy life.

As one Turkish historian, Ylmaz Öztuna, has pointed out, prior to the coup against Sultan Abdülaziz (1876), the admiral of the fleet, Ahmet Pasha of Kayseri, was extremely aggrieved at losing the title of *Kaptan-ı Derya* and being called Minister of the Navy (*Bahriye Nazırı)* instead. Aiming to undo this change, claims Öztuna, Ahmet Pasha collaborated in the coup launched in the name of introducing a constitution. Although the reason for his actions is not known for sure, this explanation does seem plausible. And it would be fair to say that the Minister of the Navy should have been able to retain his former title.

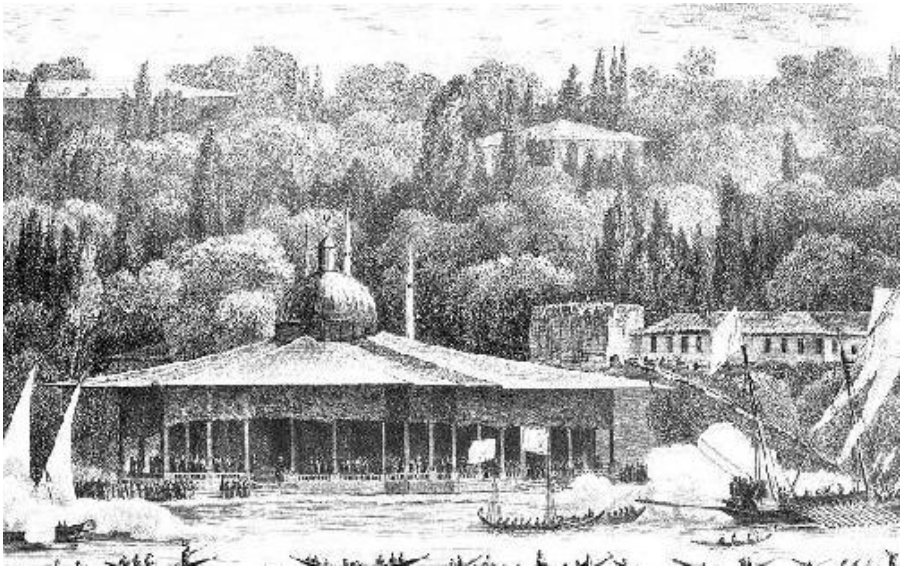
Not all of those who held the rank of vizier were soldiers. One thinks, for instance, of those members of the Imperial Council who carried the title of *nişancı*[24]. On the other hand, there were commanders of the Janissary Corps who held the rank of vizier but were not called pashas; they were known as aghas. The chief agha of the Janissary Corps was a member of the Imperial Council and a vizier with the rank of marshal, yet he was still called an agha.

Some of the pashas were at the same time talented practitioners of a profession. Cerrah Mehmet Pasha, who managed to rise to the post of grand vizier, is remembered for his capabilities as a surgeon. The Istanbul district of CerrahPaşa, where he had many mosques built, is named after him[25]. To some extent, it was the job of the pashas to build up Istanbul. By fostering the construction of Turkish baths, medreses and, most crucial of all, mosques, they practically laid the foundations of the districts of the Ottoman capital. Some of the buildings they commissioned are really very interesting. The role that the pashas played in the development of Istanbul is the reason why Istanbul is referred to as 'the city of pashas'. Many districts bear the name of a pasha.

In the Classical Age, the highest ranking officials of the Ottoman military were educated in the Enderun. However, there were also men who did not receive their training there but were raised to be janissaries in the barracks set aside for young recruits. There can be no doubt that the core of the Ottoman military system was the practice of *devşirme*. What is also certain is that, from the seventeenth century onwards, the majority of conscripts were Turkish children from Anatolia and Rumelia. When a child was taken from his hometown—which generally occurred between the ages of 10-12—he would be brought to either the Edirne Palace, the Galata Palace or the Topkapı Palace depending on his physical appearance, intelligence and abilities. The conscripts brought up in these palaces were naturally more advanced than others when it came to reading, writing and certain art forms, although obviously not all of them were able to excel. Some devirmes went on to become legendary statesmen, a shining example being Mehmet Pasha Sokolovic, who served as grand vizier for fourteen and a half years, during the reign of three different sultans. As was mentioned earlier, he came from the Bosnian town of Sokol and was born into a clerical family of Serbian stock. He was drafted into the army with the consent of his family, after which virtually all his family converted to Islam. His brother Peç (known in Turkish as pek), however, became the Serbian patriarch. As if it were not enough that Mehmet Pasha Sokolovic was an extremely competent reader and writer, as well as a connoisseur of literature, the place where he was born, his family and origins predestined him to be a highly proficient grand vizier.

Among those who had undergone devşirme we find not just the very talented sportsmen who emerged from the Enderun but also musicians, gifted calligraphers, people with extensive knowledge of literature and leading figures in Islamic scholarship and jurisprudence. One of these ex-conscripts was Lutfi Pasha, a grand vizier to Süleyman the Magnificent and author of *Asafname*[26]. Another was Süleyman the

Magnificent's ill-fated right-hand-man Ibrahim Pasha, whom we encountered in Chapter Two.



The pashas who had not attended the Enderun even included illiterate men like *Kemenkeş* Kara Mustafa Pasha, the famous grand vizier of the era of Murat IV and Ibrahim I. Despite his illiteracy, he proved himself a very competent administrator. When it came to financial matters, he was as shrewd as any graduate from the Enderun, and he was certainly a highly accomplished vizier. The fact that he was referred to as 'Kemankeş' (archer) stems from his being extremely skilful in this sport, particularly in times of war. All in all, he was successful both as a military man and as a civilian official.

There can be no doubt that Köprülü Mehmet Pasha, who played a prominent and unique role in the history of the Ottoman Empire and state, numbered among the illiterate pashas who rose up from the janissaries. His son Fazl Ahmet Pasha more than compensated for the educational deficiencies of his father and became one of the best-known medrese teachers of his time before finding his way into the military establishment. Fazl Ahmet would also become one of the most eminent grand viziers in Ottoman history.

Among the soldier pashas who led the Ottoman state we also find individuals who had their roots in the class of religious scholars. Conversely there were people who passed from the military to the *ulema* class. İbn-i Kemal, whom we know as Kemalpaşazade, was one of them. In the nineteenth century, we even come across one figure, the famous historian and jurist Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, who rose from

the rank of *kazasker* to the administrative class and went on to attain the title of pasha.

The military class of the Ottoman Empire also held sway over civilian life. Yet we should not forget the numerous lower-ranked civil servants who acted as a kind of counter-balance to them: the financial officials and district treasurers who had been trained to be clerks, and the Phanariot Greek[27], Armenian, and Turkish clerks working in the office of the executive secretary to the grand vizier (*Reis-ül Küttab*). One thinks of the illustrious members of the Turkish-Greek families the Mavrokordatos and Argiropulos, as well as the very famous Muslim scholar Katip Celebi, whom Europeans refer to as Hadji Caliph or Hadji Kalfa.

Within the *ulema* class there were *kadıs* responsible for legal and municipal services, the *kazaskers* to whom they were subordinate and, from the seventeenth century on, the *Sheikh ul-Islam*, who was designated the leading member of this class.

Until the empire underwent modernization, the state was governed by the classes of people introduced thus far. Some of them were Turkish children from Anatolia or Rumelia, others were Albanian or Bosnian. There were *devşirmes*, just as there were people who had entered the Palace or the Janissary Corps as a kind of career move. As we have stressed, these people differed in terms of their professions, capabilities and knowledge. However, it must be underlined that none was seen as superior to another on the grounds of his capabilities and level of education.

The nineteenth century saw the emergence of a set of unschooled people whom we may term 'pashas from the ranks.' The only training they had received was as simple soldiers. Examples include Yedi Sekiz Hasan Pasha, otherwise known as Hadji Hasan Pasha from Çorum, and Tahir Pasha, the commander of the legendary Albanian Riflers. We should also remember Abdülezel Pasha, one of the martyrs of the Greek War (1897). Several of the 'pashas from the ranks' did not even know how to read a map, but as they had photographic memories of topography they sometimes knew their surroundings better than those who could decipher maps.

By every account, however, the Turkish military class underwent a large-scale transformation in the nineteenth century, a transformation prompted by the introduction of the natural sciences into modern education. Starting in the eighteenth century, modern centralised and standing armies replaced the conventional military units. The inveterate enemies of the Ottoman Empire, namely the German-Austrian bloc and Tsarist Russia, introduced military reforms along these lines, and the Ottomans had no choice but to follow suit.

The newly founded engineering schools paved the way for

the training of new engineers, who could contribute to the efficacy of the Corps of Cannoneers and the Corps of Military Engineers. This is exactly what happened in France. The bridges and buildings that these engineers designed were intended for use by soldiers and at times of mobilization. Then came the training of professionals such as veterinarians, doctors, military surgeons and physicians, who were supposed to meet the needs of the technical units, for example the cavalry, which were an indispensable part of the new standing army. In the eighteenth century it became apparent that there were not enough veterinarians or doctors. Thus, military medicine and military veterinary medicine spread to civilian circles, and in the nineteenth century civilian schools were given more official status as administrative, legal and commercial schools, the underlying aim being to foster more effective management of the finances of the centralised state. From this point on we witness innovation in the Ottoman military class, compliance with modern methods, and the emergence of a new type of soldier and officer.

Various innovations enabled the rapid modernization of the mode of command in the Ottoman army. These included the reformation of the Military Academy (*Mektep-i Harbiye*) immediately after the abolition of the Janissary Corps (1826) and above all the establishment in 1848 of a school for the general staff, namely the *Erkan-ı Harb Akadıemisi*, the equivalent of which had long existed in some European armies. It was these two institutions that paved the way for the modern Ottoman army and the emergence of the cadres that shaped our contemporary history.

The pashas of the nineteenth century stemmed from the civilian, i.e. administrative, class, as well as from the military class. They included men like Mithad Pasha, who served as governor while still holding the rank of vizier. There were painters like Şeker Ahmet Pasha and prominent pashas from the School of Medicine, men of this kind who came from the military and others from the civilian classes, while there were also people with exclusively military roots. Sometimes these two classes would become entangled in minor conflicts over protocol, particularly when the matter at hand was the administration of the *eyalets*. Later, however, the *eyalets* were transformed into *vilayets*, and governorship of them was entrusted to administrative pashas. Military regions, on the other hand, sometimes encompassed several v*ilayets*. The region named ‘Edirne’ (a city in Turkish Thrace) continued to be responsible for the whole of Rumelia, the First Army for Istanbul, the Erzincan region for the East, and Baghdad, Damascus and Yemen for Arabia. A similar kind of organization existed in the navy. In the old days, the admiral based at Kasımpaşa had been nominally responsible for law and order in

Kasımpaşa while controlling a number of islands that could be considered his personal fiefdoms. Meanwhile, several archipelagos were handed over to those admirals who held the rank of sanjakbey. When the end came for the system of feudal tenure on which this allocation was based, it precipitated the restructuring of the navy.

The arrival of a new military system brought with it a new general staff, some of whose members were noteworthy. A good example is Gazi Ethem Pasha, the hero of the Battle of Dömeke in the 1897 Turkish-Greek War. What is particularly striking is that Ethem Pasha was so cultured as to bring back with him to Turkey several historical artefacts. He achieved great success not just in the Greek War but in every conflict in which he was involved, as did Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Pasha. Mahmud Şevket Pasha, the grand vizier and minister of war in the final phase of the Empire was erudite enough as to have written a number of works. All these men were pashas of the Prussian school, while also being very knowledgeable in military and historical matters.

This group, which had started to come to the fore, stood for the modernization of the Empire. Another group of military men born in the 1880s, foremost among whom were Mustafa Kemal Pasha[28], Kazım Pasha-Karabekir, Fevzi Pasha and Ali Fuat Pasha shared the same goal and displayed similar features, although the same could not be said for Enver Pasha, who was to lead the Empire and the army down the road to defeat, in the pursuit of his fanciful goal of attaining an early promotion. The dynamism of this group should come as no surprise. In the thick of World War I, namely between 1917 and 1918, all its members were promoted to the position of brigadier general, and this when they were just 35 or 36, indicating that they had become highly experienced soldiers at a very early stage. But how could it have been otherwise? These soldiers had spent two years chasing after brigands in Damascus and Yemen, followed by another three in the mountains of Macedonia. That is, at the same time as they were trying to wage a war they were having to deal with detachments of bandits. As they had been well trained in the Military Academy, they were familiar with foreign literature and had contact with civilian elites.

Amidst the turmoil of the late Ottoman Empire, they gained considerable experience and were promoted early, eventually becoming engaged in the Turkish War of Independence as generals when they were around 35. These were the men who commanded the Turkish forces in the War of Independence, having learnt all they needed to know in the Dardanelles and the Caucasus, in Galicia, Yemen, Baghdad, Palestine, and on the Suez front. Among them we find a number of fascinating figures, like Ömer Faruk Efendi, son of

the last caliph Abdülmecid. He was a friend of Mustafa Kemal, a good soldier who had been educated in Prussia. During World War I, he fought on the Marne front against France on the side of Turkey's ally, Germany. For this, the emperor awarded him the medal of the 'black eagle' (*kara kartal*), not because he was a prince but because he deserved recognition for his efforts. Similarly, Prince Osman Fuat Efendi distinguished himself as a commander on the Suez front.

Other members of this generation included Şükrü Pasha, who valiantly defended Edirne during the Balkan Wars, and Ali Rza Pasha, who fought bravely in the defence of the fortress of Shkoder, later being appointed as pasha for a second time. (In 1908, he had had his first pashaship rescinded when he was demoted to the rank of colonel.) We should also mention the other members of the military elite, such as Ali Nizami Pasha, who were educated in Prussian and French schools and academies. They included men like Asım Gündüz and smet nönü, who belonged to the general staff at the time of the War of Liberation and distinguished themselves in this capacity. We know very well who it was that, along with Mustafa Kemal Pasha, pulled the empire together after it appeared to have collapsed during World War I and after it had been in such a sorry state during the armistice. The men who saved the country from its plight by launching a resistance struggle have not been forgotten.

This group managed to attain such knowledge and acumen, in addition to military skills, for two main reasons. Firstly, they benefited from the expansion of education in the final era of the empire and secondly they accumulated invaluable experience from living in such a vast territory, a factor which enabled them to mature at an early age.

THE OTTOMAN *KADII*

The position of *kadı* was an important institution in the Ottoman Empire and all Muslim countries. The term *kadı*, meaning 'judge', comes from the Arabic word *kaza*, consisting of the letters 'kaf' and 'dad', which denotes 'judging'. It is clear that the *kadı* was a very distinct phenomenon, yet at the same it was not, since there have been judges on earth as long as human societies and states have existed.

Apart from being a court judge, the Ottoman *kadı* was a public notary, the inspector of the town's wakfs (religious or charitable foundations) and a mayor, the latter function being particularly significant as in mediaeval Europe judges likewise ruled cities. The judge was thus the supervisor and superior of the officials and superintendents who were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in a town. The official in charge of overseeing the market of

a town, termed the *muhtesib*, was subordinate to the *kadı*, an arrangement which was not just interesting in itself but also identical to the situation in other empires. The Ottoman *kadı* corresponded to the *praefectus* in ancient Rome and the *nomarch* or e*parch* in the Byzantine Empire, while subordinate to the eparch was the *agoranomos* ('agora/marketplace overseer'), the equivalent to the muhtesib in Muslim countries.

The Ottoman Empire established across its huge territory, and in the life of the Mediterranean region, an administrative system with a notable degree of centralisation. *Kadıs* were assigned by Istanbul to all of the sanjaks within the Ottoman domain, as well as to its *kazas* (districts), whereby the term *kaza* significantly means 'the duty of a *kadı*'.

The supervisors of the *kadıs* in Rumelia and Anatolia were the respective *Kazasker efendis* of these regions, while a separate hierarchy was established for Egypt. That is to say, Ottoman *kadıs* served on three continents, from the smallest *kaza* to the largest administrative unit, but all of these officials were appointed from Istanbul.

Since the *kadı* belonged to the Ottoman class of scholars, he was by necessity a graduate of a medrese. Graduates of medreses began their careers in one of three professions. One was to be an i*fta*, a kind of consultant to a mufti, the other a medrese teacher, and the third a *kadı*. Those entering these kinds of occupations would be held in high esteem in almost every Islamic country. But there was a particular dimension to the Ottoman system. From the point of view of protocol, all of the *kadıs* enjoyed both vertical and horizontal equality and, in order to be appointed, needed either to undergo a certain training or to sit a special exam. It did not matter how many years a would-be *kadı* had spent in such-and-such a medrese. The important thing was that he had passed the exams associated with medrese education and, most crucially, that he had graduated from one of the great medreses such as the Fatih Medrese (also called *Sahn-ı Seman*) in the fifteenth and sixteenth century or the Süleymaniye Medrese in the sixteenth century. Those students who received the approval of their teachers and graduated from these schools as *danişmends*, meaning that they were qualified to work as medrese assistants, would be examined by a committee consisting of various individuals, having to produce both oral and written responses. If they finally succeeded, they would be regarded as worthy of receiving the degree of Istanbul *Ruusu*. Even if he had studied in a medrese for forty years, a man who did not attain this degree could never hope for the esteem enjoyed by a successful applicant. He would not able to work as a m*üderris* or *ifta*, let alone a *kadı*.

Just as there were different classes of *kadı*, medrese teachers were also categorised into different degrees in Anatolia, Rumelia and Egypt. They would start working for a daily allowance of 25 akçe. Those at the lower degrees would be assigned to smaller towns, the higher ones to medreses, and if someone had a sufficiently high rank he would be promoted. An extremely bright person could be appointed to a higher position still.

As we well know, Cevdet Pasha, one of the most prominent legal administrators in Ottoman history, was remarkably young when he started working as a teacher in the august Süleymaniye Medrese. He had the rank of *Kibar-ı Müderris*, which corresponds to the ordinarius professor of today. For his accomplishments, he was conferred the title of *kazasker*. While serving as such, he left behind the class of religious scholars and, as a vizier, transferred to the class of administrators. A *kadı* like Cevdet Pasha would begin working in a small town of Anatolia or Rumelia for just 25 akçe per day. What this meant in effect was that he would have to extract his own salary from the charges paid to the court. It would hardly have been possible for him to pocket all of the court's income. In the course of time, he would gain promotion and move to another place, never staying more than one-and-a-half or two years in a district. What lay behind this constant relocation was the belief that a judge and the residents of the district would become too familiar with each other and their respect for him would diminish should he stay overly long. As we will remember, the *kadı* was also the mayor, the inspector of wakfs, and the person who supervised the collection of taxes. Furthermore, if there was any fortress in the place he was assigned to—which there generally was—the *kadı*, and not the sanjakbey or beylerbey, would be the one who checked whether or not the garrison and the fortress guard were doing their job properly.

Certain *kadıs*, known as *mehayif müfetties*, were assigned to audit other *kadıs*. A more important point is that, in some situations, *kadıs* would lead the public in instigating collective petitions to be sent to central government. This, in fact, was a responsibility very much within the powers of a mayor; according to sharia, moreover, the *kadı* was not just an official of the state but also at the same time a representative of its subjects. The *kadı* was the only legal authority in the court. In the nineteenth century, however, things were to change.

One of these changes was the introduction of the new post of public prosecutor. Previously, there been no such thing as a lawyer either. These kinds of institutions do not exist under Islamic law, and in any case there was little need for them in the period in question. The *kadı* would implement not only the provisions of sharia but also

the unwritten sultanic laws (*örfi sultan kanunlar*) that had to be interpreted within the framework of sharia. As an administrator, the *kadı* had many responsibilities.

This sometimes had very tragic consequences. Around the time he set out for the Baghdad campaign of 1636, Murat IV ordered the hanging of the *kadı* of İznik, because he had failed to have the roads cleared of snow; that is, the *kadı* was punished for neglecting his administrative duties. Normally, in fact, such officials, who were state administrators but first and foremost judges, enjoyed some degree of immunity. They could be neither strangled nor put to death by the sword. This is evident in a legal document dated 1595 and published by Prof. Halil nalck, in which the sultan threatened some officials: 'If you do not fulfil your duty, I will apply the following sanctions.' The same document contains the terrible threat that '*Kadıs* too may be beaten to a pulp and killed.' Certainly, there is no evidence of a *kadı* ever being beaten to a pulp; what the document was saying, though, was this: 'In no way should you be so complacent as to rely on the fact that politics will not be implemented with the sword. If you happen to commit any unlawful deed, I will sentence you to death and kill you without taking your blood', thus referring to a pre-Islamic form of punishment.

An Ottoman *kadı* would be promoted, travel to his posting, return to Istanbul and wait, and finally be given a higher position. This waiting-between-jobs was known as *mazuliyet*, which does not mean the state of being unemployed having been dismissed for malpractice. At the end of his wait, the *kadı* would be appointed to work in a larger or more prestigious sanjak, and would be given the title of *mevleviyyet kadı*. Those *kadıs* waiting in Istanbul for promotion to *mevleviyyet* having worked in smaller districts were called *tahtabaşes*.

Let me tell you a little joke. There was a *kadı* from the town of Krklareli in the European area of modern Turkey, and at that time the town was known as 'Krkkilise', meaning 'forty churches'. Whilst waiting in Istanbul for promotion, he applied by petition, most insistently, to be posted to the important sanjak of Manastr (Turkish for monastery) in Macedonia. The officials replied, 'That's a very important centre. You're not experienced enough,' whereupon the *kadı* answered, 'Oh come on! I managed to run forty churches; are you telling me I won't be able to rule a monastery?'

Undoubtedly, the system of *kadıs* included control mechanisms based on hierarchy, educational level, experience, and examination. Incidents of corruption within both the judicial class and the administration, as well as occasional cases of bribery completely undermined these mechanisms. The office of *kadı* survived until the

end of the empire.

At this point I would like to mention a biographical document that reveals something to us about the office of *kadıı*, which has now been consigned to the pages of history. In Karaca Ahmet Graveyard in the Istanbul district of Üsküdar, among the gravestones that are decaying and being removed with every passing day, we find the tombs of various high-ranking *kadıs*. The epitaph on one gravestone contains a very interesting expression: 'Hüvel Baki', meaning 'God alone is eternal.' The epitaph was written for the former *kadıı* of Egypt, who died in the vicinity of Damascus while travelling overland from Hama in Syria to Tripoli. He is referred to as 'Sultan Ahmetimamzade'. This name indicates, in fact, that the deceased *kadı* was the son or grandson (*-zade*) of an imam in one of the so-called 'Selвtin' mosques, which were mosques that were built on the order of a member of the sultan's family and that normally had more than one minaret. Such imams were very knowledgeable, received a relatively high salary, and were known throughout Istanbul. 'Fatiha for the soul of the deceased Esseyit Mustafa Efendi. 1919,' continues the epitaph. So we are talking about the last years of the empire. Damascus had been lost the previous year, but its *kadıı* was still in place.

It is clear that most of the people who reached the rank of *kadı* acquired the culture necessary for it from their families and carried out their duties in all four corners of this huge empire. Graves like the one just mentioned can be seen everywhere, and if you scrutinise the origins of the deceased you will notice that, for instance, a person born in Rumelia was buried in Baghdad or Trabzon. Conversely, in Anatolia or Rumelia you may come across the grave of the child of an *ulema* from Trabzon or Istanbul.

The *kadı* class undoubtedly lost its role in 1826, with the abolition of the Janissary Corps, an event known as *Vaka- Hayriye* ('the auspicious event'). When the janissaries were abolished, it was not only the soldiers themselves but also public order that was shaken. This was because the commanders responsible for the security of cities, such as *asesbaşı* and *subaşı*, also came from the Janissary Corps. In the police headquarters, then termed *karavulhanes*, *Kapıkulu* janissaries had ensured law and order, although this had been the responsibility of *levents* (soldiers in the navy) in dockyard areas like Kasımpaşa, as well as the islands and some ports. Not just in Istanbul but throughout the Empire, the *kadıs* had relied upon the janissaries to get things done. Then the janissaries were abolished and the *kadıs* progressively lost their responsibilities. To start with, their role as mayor and inspector, and their responsibility for financial affairs were taken away. After a while, when the wakfs were united under a separate administration, *kadıs* had to relinquish control of them too.

Finally, administrative and criminal courts were established and the only duties left to *kadıs* involved cases in the field of private law.

As the Empire aged, the medrese education provided to the *kadı* class waned and lost its function. This was because, in the *Tanzimat*, secular education and secular schools were favoured over the previous Islamic education system. In response, the class of scholars of Islamic canon law (*faki*) immediately took what they regarded as necessary measures. They established a law school, a medrese for *kadıs*, called the *Medreset-ül* nuvvab or *Medreset-ül kudat naib*, the curriculum of which—it should be noted—was closer to western law than that of the law school *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye* founded by Mahmud II. To begin with, some branches of western law, even Roman law, were taught at the *Medreset-ül nuvvab*. In contrast to the former Islamic-judicial education system, but like the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* (School of Administration) and today's law schools, the days of the week and the hours when the classes would be held were determined beforehand. What is more, medrese teachers were subject to as tight discipline as the students. By these means, the *faki* class of jurists managed to retain its position in the judicial life of the Empire. To such an extent that, when the Republic was founded (1923) and the Civil Code (*Medeni Kanun*) adopted (1926)—marking the transition to a western-style judicial order—some prominent judges and members of the Court of Appeal stemmed from the former legal class; that is, they were graduates of the *Medreset-ül nuvvab*.

There can be no doubt that among the achievements of the final period of the Ottoman Empire was to create a central administration by imposing training and examination on the class of administrators, and to anchor the judicial system of such an immense empire in certain basic principals. In this regard, the Ottoman Empire differs greatly from the other Islamic empires in history.

Kadıs and *kazaskers* had a crucial role to play in the Ottoman Empire. Until the holders of the post of *Sheikh ul-Islam* came to the fore within the *ulema* class in the seventeenth century—a development that began during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent through the incentive of Ebussuud Efendi—the head *kadıs*, titled *kadıy*-ı leker, meaning *kadı* soldiers, who were the *kazasker efendis* of Rumelia and Anatolia, enjoyed great prominence. They sat on the Imperial Council, which is something that *Sheikh ul-Islam* did not do.

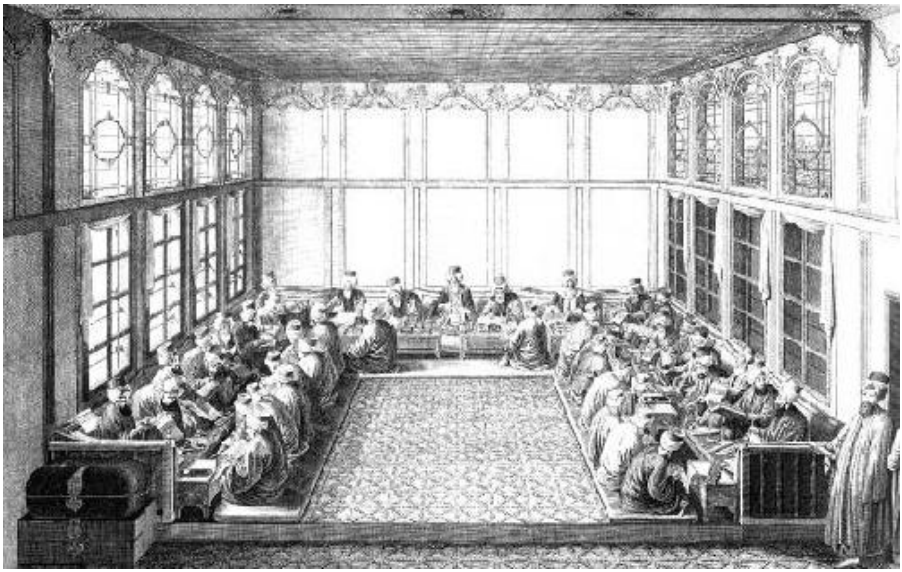
In order to reach the top, people had to have an impressive career behind them. Throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire, we come across some very distinguished families of medrese teachers and *kadıs*, such as the Ebu-shakzades, the Karaçelebizades, the Köprülüzades, the Minkarizades and countless other dynasties of religious scholars. Through their lifestyles and wealth, not to mention

their prominent role in the field of culture, such people transformed and advanced Ottoman culture.

This is why we need to know a lot about the class of *kadıs*. We have to be extremely meticulous in preserving the gravestones of *ulema* and *kadıs* in the big cemeteries of Istanbul; these are, after all, historical sources. Unfortunately, every day the graves of an entire line of *ulema* fall prey to wholesale destruction…

DIVAN-I HÜMAYUN: THE IMPERIAL COUNCIL

The term *Divan-ı Hümayun* is of pure Persian derivation. It can be translated as 'the Imperial Council'. Since the very beginning of the Empire, the *Divan-ı Hümayun* was an institution in which the rulers of the state assembled under the chairmanship of the sultan. According to legend, during the reign of Murat II, a dervish came to this assembly which had gathered on a sofa in full view of the common people and asked, 'Which one of you is Sultan Murat?' In other words, during this period, the rulers and the state on the one hand and those they ruled on the other had started to become rather too familiar. Because of such incidents, the assembly distanced itself from the public. Notwithstanding this, later on the echo from the meeting chamber in Topkapı became so loud that the speeches could be heard outside. After the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the sultans stopped chairing this committee, which was effectively ruling the world. From that point on, the emperors began to watch the negotiations while sitting in a cell above the chamber, which was separated off from it by a lattice. They would rarely dissolve the meetings by shouting but most of the time by hitting the lattice with their crooks. After the dissolution of the meeting, the grand vizier and the other members of the committee would enter the sultan's audience chamber (*Arz Odası*) by walking through the Gate of Felicity. The sultan would listen to all of them and be given a summary of the negotiations. If the grand vizier wanted to discuss a subject with the sultan privately, he would fall silent, which would tell the other members of the committee that they needed to leave the room.



The vizier or grand vizier delivered his proposals to the emperor in the form of a document which, between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, was termed a *telhis*. The emperors announced their important orders in written form with a document called *hatt-ı hümayun* (imperial letter). This was different from other letters written in the name of the emperor. By and large, the letters the viziers were given by the sultans contained sometimes formal, sometimes informal expressions such as 'Vezir-i meali semir'in' (vizier, the meaning of friend) or 'Benim Vezirim' (my vizier). In these letters we can also recognize the calligraphy of individual sultans. Murat IV, for instance, was capable of amazingly elegant calligraphy. The calligraphy of Ahmet III is accepted as a work of art, while Mahmud II was a genuine calligrapher. As for the calligraphy of Selim III, however, the least said the better!

The *Divan-ı Hümayun* was the committee which effectively ruled the empire; it was not just a council of ministers. The decisions taken by the committee cannot be said to have been effective de jure, but they were valid de facto because the grand vizier (*vezir-i azam*) held absolute power. The scheduling of the meetings and the gathering and dissolution of the committee under his chairmanship became a tradition in the course of time.

The members of the committee usually performed their morning prayers in Hagia Sophia. Hagia Sophia was the number one mosque in the entire Muslim world, and this was set down in the protocol too. (Similarly, before Istanbul was conquered by the Ottomans, the then huge cathedral had served as the number one church.) People coming to the Topkapı Palace from Hagia Sophia

would pass through the Imperial Gate on horseback before dismounting their horses at the *Babüsselam* (Gate of Salutation, also called the Middle Gate), the main entrance, where the ticket offices are found today. There were very few exceptions to the convention of dismounting, such as what happened in 1739 after the victory achieved by Ivaz Mehmet Pasha at the Belgrade peace treaty. The pasha was allowed to pass through the entrance on horseback due to the exceptional grace of Mahmud II. Riding further into the Second Courtyard was a privilege reserved for the sultan. The members of the Divan, whose seating positions were determined by a certain hierarchy, began the discussions after the arrival of the grand vizier. During the meetings, they were served seasonal refreshments.

The Imperial Council comprised the grand vizier, followed in order of declining importance by the first, second, third and fourth viziers. As has been noted elsewhere, the *kazasker efendis* of Anatolia and Rumelia were among the members, though the *Sheikh-ul Islam* never was. His inclusion in the cabinet of the Mufti occurred many years after the *Tanzimat*, and he was second in the hierarchy after the grand vizier. All the same, the *Sheikh-ul Islam* never took his place under the Tower of Justice (*Kasr-ı Adl*), which is where the Imperial Council convened.

Next in rank after the viziers was, of course, the Agha of the Janissaries, with 'Agha' here meaning 'general'. As a marshal, the Admiral of the Fleet followed the general. Of particular significance was the participation in the Council of the *nişancı* , the highest-ranking official in the consular service of the Empire. However, the responsibilities of the *nişancı* were much greater than you might think, since he was in charge of all land registry in the Ottoman Empire. He held the records of all the small (*timar*) and large (*zeamet*) fiefdoms. His mandate included issuing and storing certificates and improving working-processes. As the leading official in the consular service, he was the superior of the *Reis-ül küttab*, the official responsible for managing a large number of foreign affairs clerks as well as the translators of the Imperial Council. He was also the head of the department dealing with incoming and outgoing correspondence. Of course, the most important of his tasks was his responsibility for land registry. In other words, he processed the documents of thousands of fiefdoms, which were the basis of military, executive and financial administration. Even though the territories of fiefdoms were generally allocated according to what these fiefdoms could provide in times of war, the improvement, processing and allocation of these territories depended entirely on the competence, perceptiveness and sense of justice of the *nişancı*. Naturally, these duties eventually brought with them some others, such as keeping check on the fiefdoms, following

up on fiefdoms that were left without owners, and terminating possession of fiefdoms should the need arise. Among the *nişancıs*, there were some gifted officials like Celalzade Mustafa, who proved to be an expert both in literature and history, besides blending Arabic, Persian and Turkish masterfully.

As was mentioned above, the two most important components of the Divan were the Anatolian and Rumelian *kazaskers*, who could be most accurately described as the military judges of the Ottoman army. These two officials had the crucial task of dealing with the appointment and promotion of *kadıs*, which involved overseeing the standard process of removing them from their posts and making them wait for promotion to a higher position.

The beylerbey viziers of Anatolian and Rumelia, referred to as the Beylerbeys of Anatolia and Rumelia, were members of the Council from the very beginning. There was obviously also a place in the Council for the Admiral of the Fleet, who needed the qualities outlined in Chapter XIV. As well as all these consultant viziers, the Agha of the Janissaries, the leader of all soldiers, participated in the Council.

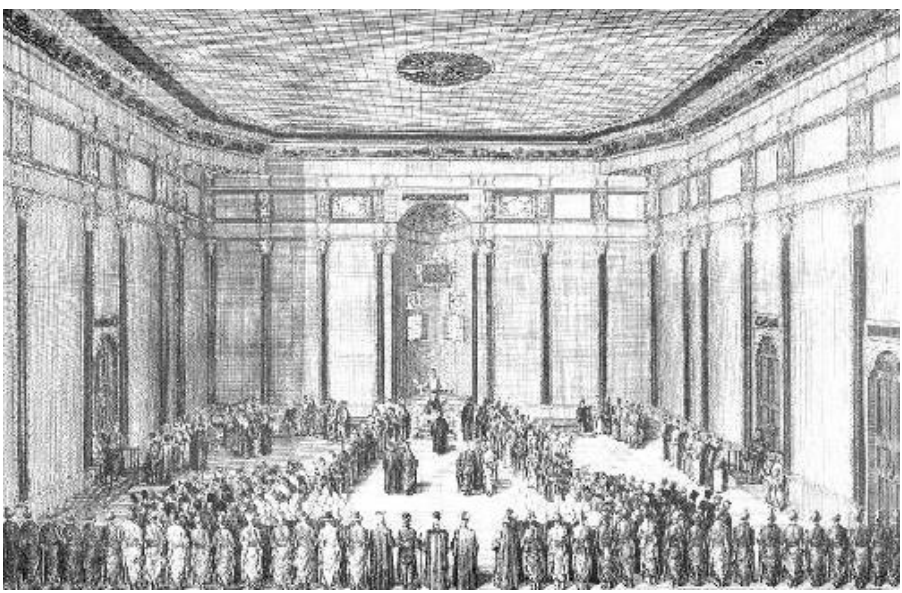
All issues related to the Empire were discussed in the Divan-Hümayun. On the one hand, it dealt with foreign affairs and made recommendations to the emperor on matters of war. On the other hand, it had to concern itself with things one would not expect such an institution to be involved with. For instance, it had the critical duty of ensuring that Istanbul was provided with sufficient fuel and provisions. At this point, it should be noted that, although Istanbul was an extraordinarily large city when one considers the technological facilities of the era, ever since Byzantine times meat and grain in Istanbul had been supplied, stored and delivered according to a special system of price setting, compulsory monopolies and quality control. The neglecting and delaying of those procedures could cause major problems, even revolts.

The decisions of the *Divan-ı Hümayun* undoubtedly had to be discussed with the sultan. However, this discussion took the form of a presentation, and it would be wrong to surmise that a veto-system was in operation. Those people had been raised in the Sublime State, in *Devlet-i Aliyye*, as the Ottoman Empire was also known, and they knew their limits.

The Divan also assembled on Friday, the busiest working day, when it would hear appeals cases involving ordinary citizens. At the end of the session, it would grant 50 akçes to those who had converted to Islam. In Ottoman times, conversion meant sacrificing one's relatives, community and even job. For this reason, widows and lonely old men who had converted received the additional support of

accommodation and even a means of living.

A meeting of the Divan every three months would be accompanied by a ceremony. On that day, officials and representatives of the first battalion of the Janissary Corps would enter through the Gate of Salutation, proceed through the Gate of Felicity, and assemble in the Second Courtyard, where they would raise a mighty *gülbank* that would move heaven and earth. Then, the soldiers were served soup. If the soldiers started eating the soup, their salaries (*ulufe*) would be paid, but if they did not, it was a sign of revolt. The sultan himself was nominally the leading member of the first battalion. This was a very interesting tradition and it was how the salaries of all troops received their tri-monthly payment. Ambassadors stationed in Istanbul, as well as delegations from neighbouring countries, also attended this noisy yet glorious ceremony.



Having continued its activities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Imperial Council began to lose its importance in the eighteenth century. For one thing, it convened less often. How this affected government is quite interesting. The eighteenth century saw something of a tendency towards decentralization throughout the empire, and it looked as if the communities in the border *eyalets* and cities were governing themselves. In the nineteenth century, centralisation brought with it a wholly different kind of structure, including the establishment of ministries. As we can see, the *Divan-ı Hümayun* was not a parliament as such; however, the roots of the Turkish central administration and bureaucracy do lie in the palace, and the Imperial Council was the first step on the road to these institutions.

There were comparable structures in other countries as well. For example, there was a similar committee of consultants in Spain, not headed by the king himself but overseen by him from behind a lattice. In Moscow, the Parliament of Boyars (*Boyarskoye duma*) served as a consultant body. The relationship between this committee and the Tsar resembled the relationship in the Divan- Hümayun. Yet—and this is not supposed to be bragging—the Ottoman Imperial Council was the institution with the most distinct and original protocol and which assigned enormous importance to pomp; the tiniest detail and nuance of its etiquette was believed to carry a certain meaning. Even a tiny delay in one element of the procedure was deemed to be highly significant. When a member raised his voice during the meeting, he received criticism, his attitude being seen as a revolt of sorts. There may have been conflicts and disagreements, but harmony still prevailed. If the sultan had a strong personality or his personal representative chaired the Council effectively, things went smoothly.

Next to the Divan were the offices that handled the paperwork of the Palace. The documents from these offices are today stored in the Archives of the Prime Ministry. This collection used to be kept at the Topkapı Palace, but now in its place is one of the world's most interesting gun collections. Let us hope that, in the future, we will be able to exhibit these guns in a separate building.

The second location where the Imperial Council could gain access to the sultan was his Audience Chamber, which is right in front of the Gate of Felicity. This is where, at fixed times, the viziers submitted their opinions to the sultan and where the grand vizier presented his *telhises*. A golden throne was placed in front of the area where the Sultan conferred with the members of the Divan, and this throne was also used for enthronements or for greeting well-wishers on the occasion of religious holidays. The flag of the empire would also be hoisted there at times, namely when jihad was proclaimed or in cases like that of 1826, when the sultan attempted to appeal to the public for support in his struggle with the Janissaries.

The Second (or Middle) Courtyard was witness to practically all the triumphs and crises of the Ottoman state. On the one hand, it encapsulated the strength of the Empire and the continuity in its traditions. Yet, on the other hand, it was also here that rebellions took place, such as the occasion when the Janissaries entered through the Gate of Salutation and forced the sultan to satisfy their demands. And there were many other cases of bloodletting in this courtyard.

On one side of it are the fantastically-located kitchens of the palace. We do not know for sure what exactly was special about the Turkish or imperial kitchen. What we do know, though, is that the kitchens at Topkapı house one of the biggest collections of porcelain

in the world, consisting of no less than twelve thousand pieces.

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Next to the *Divan-ı Hümayun* was the *Harem-i Humayün* (imperial harem). In other words, the public life of the state was only a step away from the private life of the sultan. The Tower of Justice above the *Divan-ı Hümayun* is one of the best points from which to view Istanbul. Interestingly enough, the dimensions of this impressive tower are comparable to those of the minarets of monuments like the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia. Built in the Renaissance style, the Tower, which gives the *Divan-ı Hümayun* its profile, represents the Palace not because of its height but in its elegance. After a fire in the seventeenth century, it was rebuilt using stone and brick. Similar tower structures can be seen in all the palaces of the Ottoman era, be that the Hansaray in Bahçesaray, the Edirne Palace, and even the mansions of eighteenth century notables. But this tower, at the bottom of which there was a dome, was unique in that it provided the state with its name: the main meeting hall of the Imperial Council, which was the most important element of Ottoman government, was called *Kubbealtı* (under the dome), while the members of the Council were called *Kubbenişin rical* (men sitting under the dome). From this tower, and especially at twilight, it is possible to watch the Golden Horn shining, as its name promises.

Once you have entered the Third Courtyard through the Gate of Salutation and then the Gate of Felicity, your eyes will fall upon one of the most interesting imperial schools in world history, the *Enderun-u Hümayun*. The Enderun was located around the outside of this courtyard, where art exhibitions are held today. It was the institution in which the devirmes destined to run the empire were raised and educated but where the devirmes also worked. We shall deal with the Enderun in some depth in subsequent chapters.

SULTANAHMET

Sultanahmet is the square at the centre of the world. If you are wondering what I mean, walk down towards Sultanahmet Square and, between the Square and Hagia Sophia, just at the entrance to the Basilica Cistern known as the *Yerebatan Saray*, you will find the Million Stone. This is where the roads extending to all four corners of the Ottoman Empire begin. Since the fourth century, Istanbul has been a world capital and it has preserved this quality with the help of history and fate. Having long remained on the sidelines because of economic crises, impoverishment, and the destruction wrought by two wars, Istanbul is now on the way to becoming a culture capital once more. Sometimes there are so many concerts taking place on the same day that art-lovers cannot decide which one to attend. At the same

time, Istanbul is witness to great poverty, major problems, and the unequal distribution of services. Once we have overcome all these challenges, we will, as a nation, have solved the problems of this great capital of culture.

Unfortunately, over the last fifty years a number of tall buildings have been constructed near the Basilica Cistern, and existing buildings are being extended skywards, since rules have been bent in favour of certain people. At the time of the two Roman Empires, by means of contrast, in order to protect the Basilica Cistern and other cisterns, practically no high buildings could be constructed in the area of the Hippodrome (built in the 330's), a conservation practice that continued into the Ottoman era, when the area became known as *At Meydanı* (Hippodrome, literally 'horse square'). All the same, with the exception of buildings like the Palace of Ibrahim Pasha, the Rectorate of Marmara University, which served as a trade school in the nineteenth century, and the *Defteri Hakani Nezareti*, today known as the Istanbul Title Deed Office, there are still no high buildings in the *At Meydanı*. There are, however, fears that the silhouette of this area will soon be changed owing to the vogue for building new hotels. But if buildings do spring up in the *At Meydanı*, this will harm the texture and aesthetics of the whole area. What is more, people are concerned that the archaeological riches lying beneath the city will be destroyed in the course of any future foundation-laying.

Today there are many ugly buildings around the square. One of them is the Sultanahmet Courthouse. Although it was designed by a well-known Turkish architect, it can hardly be counted as one of his best works, and it spoils the silhouette of the square, as well as creating an unnecessary traffic problem due to the hectic pace of the courthouse.

A people and country that possess a place like Sultanahmet Square and the monuments around it have every right to be renowned and praised for their culture and unique history. Yet if we allow these gems to be destroyed or neglected, and turn a blind eye to the ugly things around them, we will clearly not deserve this renown and praise.

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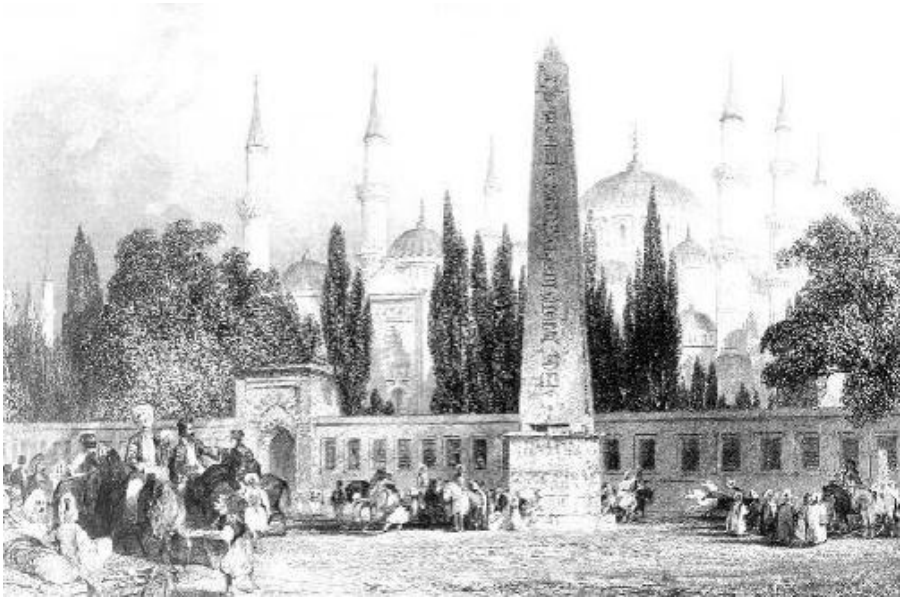
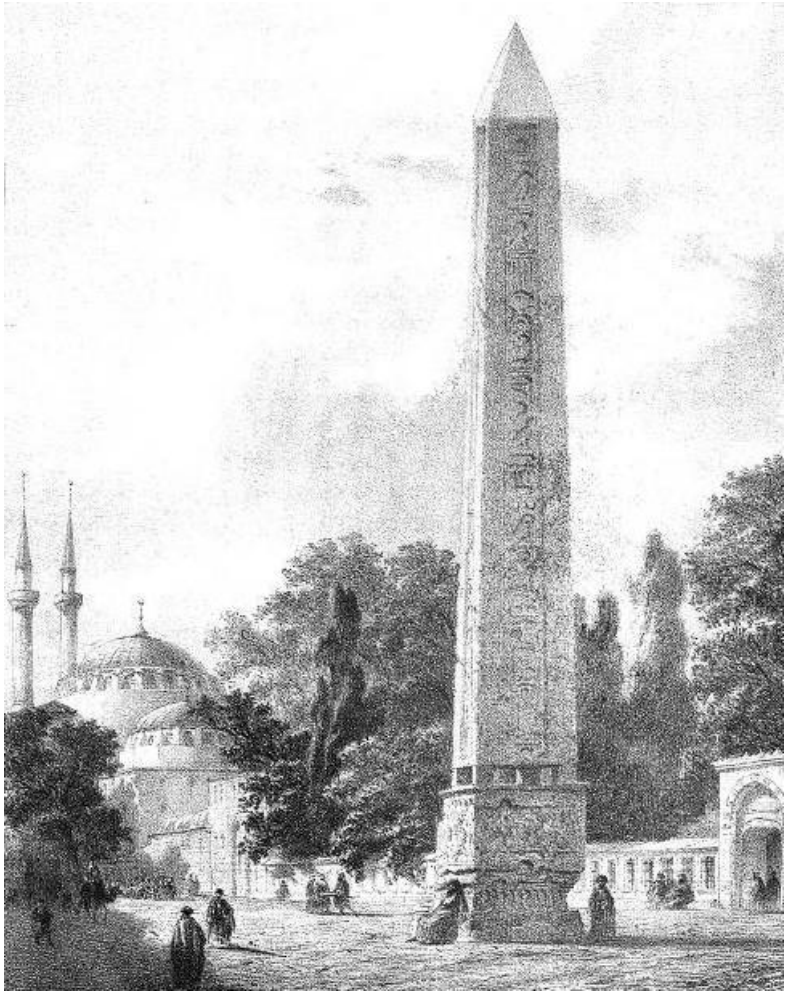


The Hippodrome was considered to be the central point of this city, which for five hundred years was the capital of the world. When you look at the monuments there, you can understand why. Right in the middle stands an obelisk belonging to Thutmosis III, which was brought from Egypt during the reign of Emperor Theodosius. This shows us that the colonial powers' habit in the nineteenth century of bringing over obelisks from Egypt to their capitals, be that Paris or London, had its roots in Turkey. By chance, this elegant obelisk and the aspect of Sultanahmet behind it combine to produce a tableau remarkably similar to the façades of ancient Egyptian temples. Indeed, it looks even more beautiful than them, since the obelisk is in perfect harmony with the architecture and geometry of the mosque. I would recommend you to enjoy this view from the Islamic Works Museum, which used to be the palace of Ibrahim Pasha.



Right next to the obelisk is one of the pedestals of the cauldron-shaped huge bronze altar which was offered up at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi, Greece, as a token of peace after the Peloponnesian Wars, the famous civil war of the Classical Greek era. It was originally a bronze column with a snakehead capital, a very eye-catching pedestal. As far as I know, the snakehead, which dropped off, is exhibited in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum. The third column was erected by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine, known as Constantine Porfirogenetos, Porfirogenetos meaning 'born in the purple', the colour that symbolised the Byzantine Empire. Constantine, who was very partial to pompous ceremonies, of which he organised no few, had this column plated with yellow brass, so that the column would shine as if gold. Thinking that it was gold, the Crusaders of 1204, that is, the insolent wild mob who descended on Istanbul from Europe, ripped out the brass around the column and took it with

them. As an Austrian friend of mine asked wittily, 'Who were more stupid and tasteless? The people that tore out the plating, thinking that it was gold, or those that had the plating done in the first place? It's hard to say.'

Still, this is Istanbul we are talking about, and the Hippodrome experienced the same kinds of things in the Ottoman era as it had done ever since the Byzantine era. The flamboyant and grandiose phase in the history of Sultanahmet was to end with the mass meeting in 1919 at which female writer Halide Edip Adavar made an impassioned plea for Turkish resistance to the occupation of Izmir. Today, Sultanahmet is regarded more as a tourist venue. However, we should not forget that, rather than being just a tourist venue, it is the very heart of Turkish civilization and history.

Hagia Sophia was the fruit of the Nika Revolt of 532, the reason for this being that the masses revolting against the Emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora chanted 'Nika' (victory) at the same time as they burnt down a wooden church with the name Hagia Sophia. The monument we see today was created after Justinian had had this church rebuilt. The enormous church, eventually opened in 537, would remain the biggest place of worship in the world for another 1000 years, until the construction of the Church of Saint Pierre in Caen and Istanbul's own Süleymaniye Mosque, followed about 50 years later by the completion of the Sultanahmet Mosque right next to Hagia Sophia. It was a building that all nations, Christian or Muslim, would envy and take as a model. Through the many legends about it, it retained a place in the life and history of these nations.

What makes Hagia Sophia so special is its immense dome. Large domes had existed long before; the Pantheon temple in Rome, at least, boasted one. The latter dome, though, looked like half an apple placed on top of a glass, and the technique involved in this kind of architecture was allegedly a good deal more simple than that applied at Hagia Sophia. In the latter case, two famous young classical architects, Isidorus of Tralleis and Anthemius of Miletus, managed to support the gigantic dome with a trigonometrical wonder, namely by placing its base on columns. Although it suffered a major collapse very soon after being built, and was repaired twice after this, it survived up to the time of Sinan the Architect, and on to the present day, without the need for any major repairs. The last repairs to be carried out were undertaken by the Italian Fossati brothers during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid. It was then that the old frescos on the dome and elsewhere throughout the mosque were published in book form. Even though the Russian tsar had offered in writing to finance this publication, it was Sultan Abdülmecid who actually paid for it.

Furthermore, the first extensive catalogue related to Hagia Sophia, namely the catalogue of scientific art at Hagia Sophia, was dedicated to Sultan Abdülmecid Khan.

As I have mentioned, Hagia Sophia was unequaled until the sixteenth century, and there can be no doubt that it was converted into a mosque by the Ottoman conquerors of the city. All the ceremonies, *kamets* and *khutbahs* (sermons) in this mosque are performed in line with a unique ritual, an etiquette, a series of customs. This is why Hagia Sophia is such an important religious centre. The fact that Hagia Sophia was converted into a museum in the 1930's can be understood as reflecting the new secular Republic's desire to present a new image to the international community.

The renaming of the Hippodrome as Sultanahmet stems from the fact that the young Sultan Ahmet XIV, who was enthroned very early and who died very early too, ordered the construction of Sultanahmet Mosque. What is special about this mosque is that it has six minarets, which led certain people to add one more minaret to the great mosque in Ravza-i Mutahhara in Medina, the location of the grave of the prophet Muhammed. But Sultanahmet is the final masterpiece of Ottoman architecture, the last product of synthesis, and it is especially famous for its tiles.

On entering Sultanahmet Square, you will notice that the calls to prayer from the minarets of Sultanahmet and from the minarets of neighbouring mosques follow on from each other in the manner of a canon. You will hear too the way they end up chanting in unison. In the course of time, traditions particular to the square came into being, and it is worth dwelling on these. Even the Sokullu Mehmet Pasha Mosque, also known as *Şehit* (Martyr) Mehmet Pasha Mosque, located outside of the square, a short distance downhill, appears to conform to the local pattern.

Sultanahmet Square was the location of bloody rebellions and contests, such as the Nika Revolt and comparable events in the Ottoman era. As mentioned earlier, Süleyman the Magnificent's elegant vizier Ibrahim Pasha, then Ibrahim Pasha the Favoured (*Makbul brahim Paşa*), brought back from Buda in Hungary a statue-group of mythological figures, the so-called 'Three Beauties'. When he erected these statues in front of his stone palace, it prompted gossip and rebellion. Figano, an Ottoman poet of that era, adapted, or perhaps plagiarised, a poem that the Persian poet Firdevsi had written for Mahmud of Ghazna (who also bore the name Ibrahim). Out of this poem, Figano wrought a couplet, obviously alluding to Ibrahim Pasha:

Two Ibrahims came into this world
One broke idols, the other erected them

This couplet infuriated Ibrahim Pasha and was probably the

reason for the death of Figano. As far as I know, the 'Three Beauties' was the only sculpture to be put up in a square of a Muslim city, although such statues can be found in palaces. For instance, during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham bin Abdulmalik, there were similar statues, as well as mosaics, in what is today known as the Palace of Hisham in Jericho, as well as in the Palace of Damascus. They can also be seen in monuments apart from palaces, but it was only in the twentieth century that Muslim rulers would again erect a statue in a square.

Very interestingly, a debate is still going on today about the precise nature of the Palace of Ibrahim Pasha. Is it really the palace of Ibrahim Pasha or a *mehterhane*, a stone building in which drums and flags were carefully stored? It is highly probable that it was the palace of this famous grand vizier, who fell victim to the sultan's wrath and was executed, thus being demoted from Ibrahim Pasha the Favoured (Makbul brahim Paşa) to Ibrahim Pasha the Murdered (Maktul brahim Paşa). Today, the palace is one of the most remarkable museums in Europe. Largely due to the efforts of the museum staff, Dr. Nazan Ölçer and her colleagues, very interesting exhibitions have been organized here.

Sultanahmet retained its Sultanahmetness in the nineteenth century too. To commemorate the visit to Istanbul of the Prussian Kaiser Wilhelm, a fountain was constructed in the style associated with the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Morik, a style which was then popular in Germany and the Germanic world. However, the fountain does not suit the square. It was built there not for aesthetic reasons, but in line with a certain political vision, out of fear and a sense of obligation. There is no harmony at all between that fountain and the Sultanahmet Fountain just a few metres away.

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Once surrounded by wooden buildings and charming neighbourhoods, Sultanahmet today faces the danger of being smothered in concrete. Now that the square has become important for tourism, a number of crafty individuals are trying to conceal this danger from historians and people with good taste by putting up a wooden fence to hide those unlawful soaring buildings.

Every square metre of Sultanahmet should be used wisely and protected. The boundaries of Sultanahmet start in the south next to Caalolu, an area of importance to the book trade, and extend as far as the sea. In the west, following the route of the Divanyolu, they stretch to Beyazt, a place famous for its square, university, and old buildings. In this area, though, we also find a number of workplaces, which bring with them the problems of ugly construction-work and heavy traffic. This poses a great danger for a location as unique as

Sultanahmet, the most beautiful open-air saloon in Europe. We have to do something to protect Sultanahmet, a home to unparalleled works from a history of 1500 years. No square in Europe is as original as this —neither the San Marco in Venice, the Concorde in Paris, nor the San Pietro in Rome.

INDEPENDENT PROVINCES WITHIN THE OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The Ottoman Empire is sometimes called the Third Rome, because the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire were very similar to those of the first and second Roman Empires; indeed, they were even wider. Today we know that the Empire stretched from the Persian Gulf in the west to the borders of Morocco in the east and from the Ukrainian steppes in the north to Somalia and Eritrea in the south, contrary to the general assumption that southern parts of it reached up to Ethiopia. Even the Danube river basin up to Hungary and the Euphrates in Mesopotamia belonged within its borders. However, neither schoolbooks nor academic publications have dealt very much with how the *eyalet* system actually worked across this vast territory.

The first type of *eyalets* were those controlled through the assignment to them of military officers and other state officials with very strong ties to the central government, in combination with the *timar* system of Ottoman land tenures. Control was upheld, furthermore, through the maintenance of a monotonous, primarily agricultural economy in these fiefdoms. As examples of *eyalets* within this first category one can give the Central Anatolian *eyalets* of Sivas (which was a *Rum elayet* at that time) and Karaman, the onetime Rumelian eyalet of Bulgaria, and the *eyalets* of Timioara (in modern Romania) and Budin (today's Hungary).

The second category of *eyalets* had a crucial role in the administrative system and life of the Ottomans. It consisted of *eyalets* called *eyalet-i mümtaze*, which enjoyed a certain autonomy and a privileged status. They were the Crimean Khanate, the largely Hungarian-speaking Kingdom of Erdel, located in the western part of today's Romania and called the Beylik of Erdel by today's Turkish historians, Wallachia (the land of the Vlachs), and finally the province of Bogdania, which constitutes today's Republic of Moldova. The territory of the Crimean Khanate included the entire western part of the Caucasian eyalets, where Kuban Kazakhs were also living, as well as the southern areas of the Ukraine. The semi-autonomous Crimean Khanate was more or less situated on the Crimean peninsula; however, a considerable part of the peninsula did not belong to the Khanate but was directly subordinate to the Ottoman central government. This territory is called the Sanjak of Kefe, yet in addition to including the

area of today's Kefe, it stretched as far as Sudak and Yalta to the south and the Azak Sea to the north.

When we turn to the southern eyalets, we come to the immense country of Egypt, a beylerbeylik[29] with a very interesting status. Because of its proximity to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the region of Hejaz was ruled in a particular way. In contrast to the other *elayets* of the Empire, Hejaz brought no income; indeed, it brought additional expenses. Sometimes, due to the lack of local qualified craftsmen and materials, it was so difficult to construct barriers around a tomb or to build or repair a fountain or waterway for pilgrims that craftsmen and building materials needed to be sent to the region from other places. Such an operation could use up the entire annual customs income of a port in the west. Similarly, a portion of the income from the rich *eyalet* of Egypt was occasionally sent to this region to make some contribution to the welfare of the people of Mecca and Medina and to help with building and maintaining accommodation there. All this assistance was, of course, for the sake of projecting a certain image. Modern states also make these kinds of investments, in which political considerations outweigh economic ones. In any case, the Ottoman Empire gave great importance to its sovereignty over Hejaz. So much so that, in the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Empire truly had the quality of a world power, Yavuz Sultan Selim, who had conquered these territories, preferred to use the title 'Hadim-ül Haremeyn-üş Şerifeyn', meaning 'servant of Mecca, Medina and two harems' rather than the title 'caliph'. The former title was used in *khutbahs* and incorporated into prayers. This corresponds to the motif of *Custodia* in Western Christianity. As we all know, the Christian states of the West were able to hold control over Jerusalem for only a short period of time; still, they attached a lot of significance to their 'custodia' of the city and interpreted their guarding of, and service to, Jerusalem as an honourable, mystic and charismatic mission. In other words, the expressions 'Hadim-ül Haremeyn-üş Şerifeyn' and 'Custodia' display noteworthy parallels.

As is well-known, during the time under discussion, Medina was a provincial city with a population of just a few thousand and very limited economic resources. The centre of the Muslim world, however, was without doubt Makkah Al-Mukarramah, or Mecca in its shorter English form. The officials who served as sanjakbeys in Mecca and Medina were not referred to as such but were given epithets like *şeyh-ül medine*, 'sheik of Medina'. In a similar vein, the *kadıs* appointed to these two regions were never allotted a low-level rank. The *kadıs* of Mecca and Medina, called *haremeyn mevleviyyeti*, enjoyed an extremely elevated position within the protocol. As proof of this, it was very

unusual if the leading *kadı* of Istanbul had not previously been the *kadı* of Mecca and Medina.

To repeat, then, the Ottoman representatives in Mecca and Medina were high-ranking officials with impressive titles. The officials charged with safeguarding and managing the wells of holy zemzem water held a very high position within the *ulema* class. The eyalet of Hejaz retained its special status up until the end of the nineteenth century or even till the end of the empire. As an example of this, one can mention the railway that Sultan Abdülhamit Khan II had built from Damascus to Medina, with Turkish engineers and labourers playing a leading role. This project was a crucial motor behind the development of Turkish technical history. The capital behind it was provided through charitable contributions from Muslims within and beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire and a 'medal of Hejaz' was indeed presented to donors.

For five months after the Armistice of Mudros at the end of World War One, Fahrettin Pasha held out in this region against the English and the Arabs. He even managed to send a wealth of holy relics back to Turkey.

In the south, the region that enabled the Empire to hold sway over the seas and to show off its glory, at the same time as providing it with considerable wealth, was without doubt Egypt. Egypt had been the jewel in the crown of the Roman emperors, and neither the Roman nor the Byzantine Empire could do without it. Once the Byzantines lost Egypt, they went into steep decline, and the same thing applied to the Ottoman Empire as well.

First of all, Egypt was a bountiful source of grain. Secondly, it was a great base for surveillance of the wider region. Thirdly, it contributed a lot to the Ottoman Empire in financial terms. Historians constantly emphasise that it was only when Julius Caesar occupied Egypt that the Roman Empire became a fully-fledged state and that Caesar was able to establish the Roman treasury once he had learned about the financial and taxation system applied in Egypt.

After the victory of Ridaniye in April 1517, Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan turned Egypt into a beylerbeylik and subordinated it to Istanbul. In doing so, he applied an interesting method. The rich *eyalet* of Egypt was divided up into seventeen sanjaks, three of which, called skenderiye, Dimyat and Rait (Alexandria, Damietta and Rosetta in English) were placed under the authority of the Mediterranean islands rather than the Beylerbeylik of Egypt, meaning in effect that income from them passed to the Admiral of the Fleet. The reason why these three sanjaks were given this special status is that they were secure and prosperous sources of grain and income, contained military bases and had great strategic value for the navy. The 'Yavuz Sultan Selim

Han Code' stipulated that the other fourteen sanjaks were to be administered by local Mamluk beys, who had to speak Turkish. In any case, some of them were of Turkish or Circassian descent. To supervise each bey, a provincial treasurer (*defterdar*) with the status of beylerbey and the rank of vizier was appointed. In this regard, it should be born in mind that the rank of provincial treasurer was important within the financial administration of the empire, and the *defterdar* had to be an expert at calculation and resource management.

The chief *kadı* of Egypt was an official with a special status and the leader of a different religious sect from most of his colleagues. This is because the Egyptian population generally belonged to the Maliki sect of Islam while very few Egyptians were from the Hanefi sect that prevailed at the Ottoman centre. This is why the chief *kadı* needed to be capable of sustaining dominance over the local *kadıs*.

The duty of the Egyptian beylerbey was to spend on Egypt the income he collected from Egypt. For this reason, there are still many traces of Ottoman influence in Egypt. A certain amount of money, called the *Cib-i Hümayun*, was sent to Istanbul to cover the personal expenses of the sultan. Ottoman rule in Egypt came to an end with the English annexation of Egypt during World War I and the replacement of the Ottoman-Egyptian Khedive (viceroy)[3]0 Abbas Hilmi Pasha with Sultan Kamil and then King Fuat, who belonged to a different branch of the Egyptian dynasty from his predecessor. But until that point, Egypt was a part of the Ottoman state.

Egypt was a rich country. Because of this, in the nineteenth century it displayed a prosperity and bourgeois lifestyle not even in evidence in the Ottoman capital. During the Classical Age, it was a very important region for the Ottomans on account of its wealth. In addition, this *eyalet* furnished the officials who oversaw the pilgrimage routes to Mecca. The official responsible for the Hadj, who was based in Suez, had the title *Mısır Emir-ül Haccı* (Egyptian Commander of Pilgrimage Routes), a similar title to that of the beylerbey of Damascus, the governor of Syria.

What this means is that affairs related to the Hadj were handled from Egypt. Twenty-four million akçe, a significant portion of the budget for Egypt, was set aside for costs related to Mecca and Medina. Without the grain and rice that was sent to Hejaz from Egypt, the population of the former would have starved. In addition, Egypt was one of the provinces that made an annual payment to the imperial centre.

The other important *elayets* were the two beyliks of Wallachia and Bogdania, Erdel, and finally the Crimean Khanate. Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, acknowledged as the true founder of the Empire, was the sultan who first came up with the idea of *eyalets*

with special privileges as well as actually putting this idea into action. Let us dwell on Wallachia and Bogdania. Wallachia consisted of the southern part of modern Romania, that is, the area around Bucharest and Targoviste. Bogdania is today the Republic of Moldavia but used to be a beylik that developed around the towns of Suceava and Iai in northern Romania. People in these two beyliks must have spoken very similar dialects of Romanian, which is the closest living language to ancient Latin. Prior to the Ottoman takeover, Bogdania, which was under Polish rule, and Wallachia, which was under the rule of the Kingdom of Hungary, were a pair of insignificant mini-states, but under Ottoman rule they became semi-autonomous states and were ruled by two local governors (voivodes) who were appointed by local aristocrats or boyars.

When we consider the cultural evolution of the Romanian nation and its move towards independence, it is clear that the years of Ottoman rule in Bogdania and Wallachia were pivotal. A well-known Romanian historian, Nikolai Yorga, who also served as minister of foreign affairs, has argued that Ottoman sovereignty in these areas prevented this Latin community from drowning in the surrounding seas of Slavs and Germans and enabled it to continue along its historical trajectory. According to Yorga, the Romanian people are therefore indebted to the Ottomans. It should also be noted that, under Ottoman sovereignty, a famous voivode, Constantin Brancievaru, was able to contribute to a Hellenic and Latin renaissance by establishing the Slavian Greek Latin academy. A Bogdanian prince, Dimitri Cantemir, however, who had been held captive in Istanbul prior to 1711, was persuaded by the Russian tsar Peter the Great to fight against the Ottomans and his betrayal of the Ottomans led to the *eyalets* of Bogdania and Wallachia being handed over to Phanariot Rum beys.

The first Phanariot Rum beys were members of the eminent Turkish-Greek administrator-family, the Mavrokordatos, who had been acquaintances of Dimitri Cantemir during his spell in Istanbul. This period saw the development of modern Romanian culture. The *eyalets* of Bogdania and Wallachia were given ever more autonomy until, in 1859, they united and formed a more or less autonomous Principality of Romania, a principality with its capital at Bucharest and where the prince was more like a king. In the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, this principality allied with the Russian Tsar Alexander II.

In the Classical Age of Ottoman history, these *eyalets* sent a certain number of soldiers to the Ottoman army and contributed annual funds during the wars in Europe. Apart from this, they supplied Istanbul with butchered animals, especially sheep, and sent

wheat from Dobrudja to selected contractors in line with the system of compulsory monopolies. It would have been impossible for a voivode to stay in his post if he proved unable to supply such goods.

As we can see, out of the two semi-autonomous northern states introduced by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror two Balkan states have emerged which are still politically and spiritually close to Turkey today. Apart from these two, there were autonomous administrations as in Dubrovnik, Erdel, the Khanate of the Crimea and the Shamkhalat of Kumuk in the Caucasus, which were largely engaging in ruling particular tribes. Although these polities enjoyed a semi-autonomous status, when it came to military and foreign affairs the Ottoman government made absolutely no compromises. This actually led to considerable unity and helped shape the structure of the Empire.

ASAR-I ATIKA: ANTIQUITIES

There is no doubt that one of the most important aspects of Turkey culture is the country's richness in *asar-ı atika* (antiquities), in other words historical objects and ruins. Indeed, Turkey is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of the amount of historical artefacts it harbours. Excavations conducted today in China, Egypt or Italy are undoubtedly bringing to light incredible finds. Nonetheless, Turkey may be thought of as the leader in this field not just due to the number of historical artefacts here but also their striking diversity.

The first settlements in Turkey appeared in the Neolithic phase in civilisation, which lasted until around 8000 BC. As we all know, the most important of these settlements was Çatalhöyük, and the excavations conducted there have aroused world-wide interest. Finds from Çatalhöyük are stored and exhibited at the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations in Ankara, which really is an important centre.

The bulk of historical and archaeological materials found in Turkey stem from the period following the Bronze Age and after 2000 BC, when writing started to be used. The diversity of these priceless objects is striking. The civilisations that made Turkey their home displayed very different qualities and styles, and the style of one Anatolian civilisation was sometimes diametrically opposed to that of another. The wealth and colour that the classical period of Ancient Greece, the Hellenistic period and the Roman Age brought to this territory are plain for all to see.

Turkey was the centre of the Byzantine Empire and home to the Seljuk civilization. There are also interesting Georgian and Armenian remains in Eastern Anatolia. The most eventful and significant period in Turkey's long history, though, is the one we call the 'Age of the Beyliks', which lasted a thousand years. And we should not forget that the most important parts of the Ottoman Empire, an

international synthesis par excellence, were located in this territory.

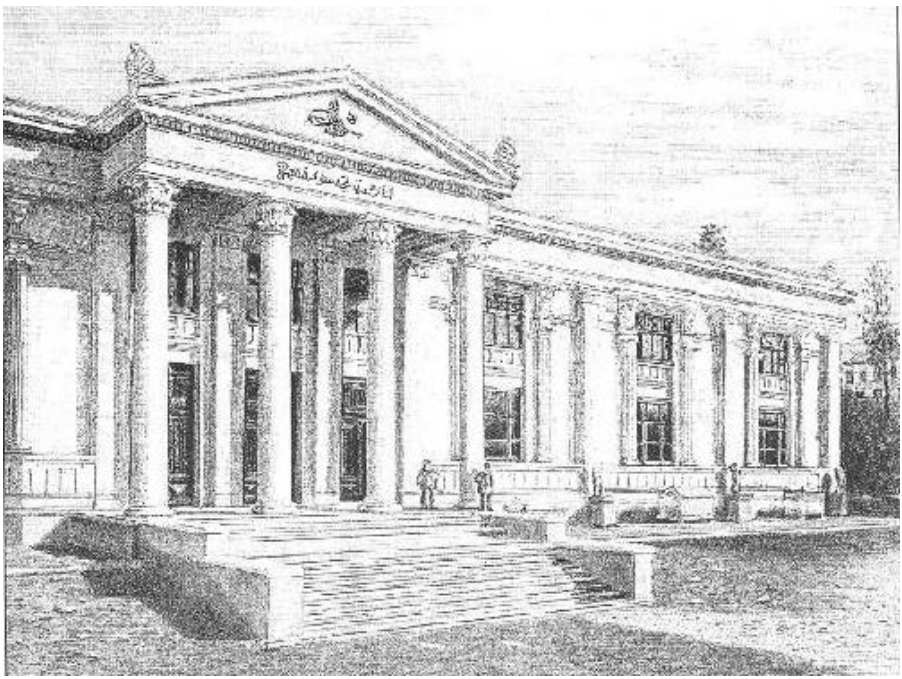
Turkey owes its wealth in historical material not just to the presence of monuments like caravanserais, places of worship and covered bazaars but also to the countless objects reflecting the various aspects of everyday life, and even to its numerous cemeteries. This wealth, however, undoubtedly brings with it big problems. Unless we develop a more mature awareness of history and historical artefacts, which does justice to the historical wealth around us, these problems will grow. But if the citizens of Turkey stand by their valuable heritage, there will be fewer problems.

One of the issues I would like to highlight is that, during Ottoman times, no one was able to appreciate the monuments of the classical period and they were decimated. Vandalism of this kind destroyed not just the valuable objects themselves but also our awareness of them. In addition to that, some Europeans plundered, deracinated and pulled up these ancient works of art, as if their civilising mission gave them the right to do so. These actions were justified, and continue to be justified, both by the perpetrators, namely the Europeans, and by some Turkish people as well. However, this is wrong. The protection of antiquities has a sorry history in our country, so what to do with them is a matter of some controversy. Indeed, the problem seems irresolvable. It must not be forgotten, though, that even Italy, the cornerstone of modern European civilization, cannot protect its historical monuments, because Italy too, despite the experience of its authorities, is helpless in the face of the mentality of plunderers and collectors. In contrast, Israel, albeit a smaller country, has a very advanced level of historical awareness and a strong national consciousness, and the Israelis have raised archaeology to the status of a national sport. Illegal trafficking of historical artefacts is at a minimal level in Israel, and such objects are protected and preserved very effectively.

Like Turkey, today's Egypt is a country particularly vulnerable to trafficking in historical artefacts and illegal excavations, even though a long time ago an awareness of the value of antiquities and the mentality to match did prevail. And it is not only Egypt that is suffering because of the crimes committed on its soil. The whole world's knowledge of the ancient civilisation of Egypt is under threat. This is because smugglers and those who are helping people to build up their private collections of smuggled artefacts are removing these artefacts from the realm of academic studies. An object exhibited in the garden or mansion of this or that collector becomes out of reach to the academic world, and artefacts in such a position can easily disappear without a trace. In an article in the *International Herald Tribune*, Souren Melikian has pointed out that, even at a centre like

Christie's Auctioneers, the oriental artefacts are in a terrible mess, so that some bowls taken from Nishapur inscribed with verses by Firdevsi (an important Persian poet) have vanished piece by piece.

Graves from the Ottoman period have become a popular target for plunder by reckless tourists and even local yobs, not to mention ultra-rich collectors. You really cannot imagine how much biographical information connected with Turkish history has been lost as a result of the mishandling and theft of gravestones.



In fact, Turkey can look back on an impressive tradition when it comes to interest shown in the ancient world. Here I am not talking about Evliya Çelebi, who travelled to, and described, the pyramids of Egypt. To be sure, he was a genius and a master at discovering and describing things. Yet we have to accept that, in the seventeenth century, knowledge about Egyptian civilization was based on a few isolated fragments, and this was as true of Çelebi as it was of the entire world. The reason is that neither excavations nor the scientific examination of artefacts had yet been conducted in Egypt and, most importantly, no one had tried to decipher that famous Egyptian form of writing known as hieroglyphs.

As we all know, it was General Bonaparte who initiated the scientific documentation of Egypt when he arrived there with his army of engravers who produced massive engravings without the use of photography. After he had managed to occupy Egypt, the General,

who would later become Emperor Napoleon, brought committees of scientists over to Egypt. He made the scientists draw the animals and plants of Egypt, as well as its historical artefacts, in a systematic way. He also initiated what would be the first major expeditions and scientific surveys. In the vicinity of Alexandria, one of his army officers found a 50cm-high stone epigraph at the mouth of what Europeans call the 'Rosetta Delta', which is now known as the Rashid Delta. On this stone there was a text in three versions: one in hieroglyphs, one in Ancient Greek, and the third in Demotic, the local Coptic language written in modern Greek letters.

This particular discovery gave Champollion the opportunity to decipher the hieroglyphs, and in this way Egypt presented itself to the outside world in all its astounding glory. Because no such discovery occurred during the reign of the Ottomans in Egypt—the interest was not there to start with—we do not have access to any data about ancient Egypt from the Ottoman period. Similarly, in the period after the Ottomans lost sovereignty over Egypt, Henry Layard, an ambassador in Istanbul, obtained a large amount of information about the Assyrian civilization through the research and excavations he conducted. At this time, namely the nineteenth century, there were no such things as archaeology or excavations in the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, we should remember that it was only in the nineteenth century that the Ottomans learnt about the kat leaf which is chewed and consumed particularly in Yemen. That is to say, the exploration of Ottoman territory for geographical and historiographical purposes was at an extremely low level and could not be compared with that of the Europeans and not even with that of the Russians.

This does not necessarily mean that no one knew anything. But some demonstrated a rather quaint view of the past. For example, Evliya Çelebi undertook a very precise examination of the remains of the Minoan-Mycenaean civilisation located on the island of Crete and came to an interesting conclusion. He said, 'These people came from Africa and were from the tribe of Djinns.' It seems that, thanks to his incredible intellect and his capacity for making comparisons, Çelebi was able to see a connection between Egyptian and Cretan art. And, although the matter remains something of a mystery, there is a strong possibility that the people who created the Cretan civilisation had migrated there from Egypt, a claim supported by other evidence too.

In the nineteenth century, during the Turkish Enlightenment period which we call the Tanzimat, an interest in exploring the past took off, and in 1847 Fethi Ahmet Pasha, the müir (marshal) of Tophane, had the Church of St. Irene transformed into a military museum. In 1869, the first imperial museum, Müze-i Hümayun, was established by Mehmet Emin Ali Pasha, the intellectual grand vizier of

the time. In fact, many years earlier, people had begun to send in correspondence and antiquities from across the Empire to the imperial centre. In 1847, for example, the sanjak of Jerusalem had had a drawing done of a porphyry marble sarcophagus found in the Ashkelon region of Gaza, and he sent this drawing to Istanbul. Although the drawing is not of a scientific standard, we should be thankful that this preliminary sketch is in the archive. It includes a note to the grand vizier, asking, 'Can we transfer it to the capital?' It would appear that the painting remained in Jerusalem and was not transferred to Istanbul; however, such transfers did take place. It is evident that, in October of the same year, the fiscal director of Adana province, Ahmet Ata Bey, had a number of antiquities collected and sent them to the capital. Studies by historians working on that period reveal that innumerable works of art were sent to the Imperial Museum.

In 1827, Ahmet Vefik Pasha, the grand vizier with a passion for the theatre, who was also a governor, appointed the German archaeologist Dethier as scientific advisor to the Imperial Museum. The only scientific inventory of the items collected at this Museum dates back to this period. In 1880, a museum was established in what we today know as Çinili Kök, the mansion from the era of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, which is located in the garden of the Archaeological Museum. The weapons stored at the St. Irene Museum were transferred to this one. In addition, Suphi Pasha published his 36-article *Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi* (Regulation on Ancient Artefacts).

Another point we should emphasise is this: considerable space was allocated to the historical artefacts of regions in the state almanacs and regional yearbooks that began to be published around that time. For example, in the yearbooks of the governorship of Aydn, which covered Izmir, Manisa, Denizli and today's Mula region, Pergamon and Ephesus are recounted in an engrossing manner. Descriptions are given of a number of objects which some so-called archaeologists today shamefully claim to be incomprehensible. The yearbook even includes a very respectable description of the Pergamon Altar, despite the fact that it is sometimes said that we did not understand the Altar and that is why we gave it to the Germans. The truth is that the Germans wanted to get hold of the Altar and tried to take it apart and transport it away, but the governor of Izmir did not let them. Later on, it would appear that the altar was surrendered as a result of negotiations at state level. In this instance, it is clear that Germany exploited its good relations with the Ottomans. They also asked for the sarcophagus of Alexander, but Ottoman officials prevented it from being handed over. Osman Hamdi Bey, the then director of the Imperial Museum, is said to have been so angry about

the Altar that he suffered a slight heart spasm. Unfortunately, the Ottoman administrators also responded positively to the demands of the Austrian ambassador Baron Prokesch von Osten: I myself discovered that some coins of historical value were given to the Austrian ambassador during the Crimean War, a form of retrospective bribery for the ambassador's country not having supported any sides in the war. This was evidently the price that had to be paid for the maintenance of good interstate relations.

There is also documentary proof that the Russian crown prince received an epigraph he liked as a present during his visit to Çanakkale, while the lid of a sarcophagus in Nur-u Osmaniye Mosque was surreptitiously transferred elsewhere without anyone noticing and then granted to the British ambassador. Such cases show us that the history of archaeology has not been studied in a sufficiently serious way.

These are among the reasons why, in the 1880's, Osman Hamdi Bey published his famous Regulation, which was resolute in its determination to prevent the trafficking of antiquities. This Regulation is the foundation for the Regulation on Ancient Artefacts in action today. After Osman Hamdi Bey was appointed director of the Imperial Museum by Sultan Abdulhamit Khan in 1881, work began on the construction of the Müzehane-i Hümayun (Museum of the Empire), which is located just below the Topkapı Palace and slightly above Gülhane Park. This building is the magnificent Istanbul Archaeology Museum of today. Its architect was a famous Istanbul-born Italian architect named Alexandre Vallaury. He designed the building in the form of the 'Sarcophagus of the Crying Women', the original of which Osman Hamdi Bey had found in Saida. Vallaury was a greater lover of, and expert on, sarcophagi. Following in Vallaury's footsteps, the Italian d'Aronco likewise designed the former Italian embassy (today's Maçka Girls Art Institute) in the form of a Renaissance sarcophagus.

Osman Hamdi Bey was an important Ottoman painter and archaeologist who conducted excavations in areas today part of Syria and Lebanon, becoming famous on account of what he found during these excavations. He studied in Vienna and Paris and then served in the Governorship of Baghdad as part of the entourage of Governor Midhat Pasha. While we are indebted to the French philosopher and philologist Ernest Renan for his examination and rediscovery of the Phoenician language, by the same token we should be thankful to Osman Hamdi Bey for acquainting us with the material manifestations of the Phoenician civilisation, since it was he that excavated and presented the Saida necropolis, in other words, the Cemetery of the Kings.

Osman Hamdi Bey trained experts like Aziz Bey and Tahsin

Öz, who served as director of the Topkapı Palace as well as leading excavations in Ephesus. After Osman Hamdi Bey, Halil Ethem Bey became director of the Imperial Museum. This very famous numismatician occupies an important place in our history, as it was thanks to him that excavations were undertaken in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, parallel to the reforms in education. Some of these excavations took place beyond the borders of today's Turkey and the finds from those and other excavations are exhibited in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum. Turkey is no longer a country where the plunder of antiquities continues unimpeded but one of the countries where serious archaeology is being practised. If the smuggling of antiquities is still taking place and damage is still being done to artefacts, this is not because of insensitivity or ignorance but because of a lack of opportunities. And this lack of opportunities is still there.

The smuggling of antiquities and similar crimes will never end in a country where it is frowned upon to feel great love for one's country, and where it is difficult to inculcate in people a respect for antiquities and a belief that they should protect their culture. The example of Italy reminds us of this and shows us too that it is not just a matter of ignorance.

The problem is that there is not sufficient cooperation between the people and the state, and there are some examples where such cooperation has led to the prevention of trafficking. Let us not forget, though, that even in Russia, where people know a lot about antiquities and stand by their civilisation, when an economic crisis emerged ten years ago, several objects were removed from museums, sold, and smuggled abroad. This shows us that it is really not easy to ensure that people retain an awareness of the value of antiquities.

What I want to say is this: Turkey looked after its heritage in the past and continues to do so today. However, there is not sufficient cooperation on this matter, neither among organisations nor among the people of Turkey. We do need to sort out this problem as soon as possible.

THE ENDERUN

Until the eighteenth century, the most important institution of the Ottoman state to exist within the Topkapı Palace was the Enderun, which means 'interior' or 'inner section' in Persian. Today we give the name 'Enderun Courtyard' to the area you see on the left and right of the Audience Chamber when you enter through the Gate of Felicity. Having entered through that gate, the buildings to your right are the first chambers of the Enderun. In a sense they are classrooms, but this should not be taken as meaning that they are the

classrooms of a school.

As its name suggests, Enderun is the section at the very centre of the palace. The area after the Gate of Felicity is where the private quarters of the emperor begin and public life ends. The Gate brings you to Enderun, the place where civilian aghas were trained for the palace but where they also served. As has already been mentioned, the children accepted into Enderun were the most outstanding of the devşirmes, physically and mentally. Around puberty, approximately at the age of fourteen or fifteen, these select children were brought to the Enderun from institutions such as the Edirne Palace and the Galata Palace.

When you turn right after passing through the Gate of Felicity, you will see the so-called 'big' and 'small' chambers. The young men who spent their time here were to be trained as Enderun aghas, but they would have been inexperienced and only candidates for this post. The boys were called 'dolamal' (meaning 'wrapped around') after the style of the garment that they were given twice a year. Only after undergoing a certain period of service and examination could they become *kaftanlı* (caftaned), meaning that they were high-ranked officials with the potential for promotion. *Kaftanlıs* were given two caftans. Boys who could not pass to this level were sent to the *Kapkulu* Corps and companies of *Sipahis*.

Life was tough in Enderun. It was a palace school but not a school in the sense that we know it. Pupils were taught about Turkish culture and Islam in great depth. Some of them were to become quite eminent. One was Albert Bobovius, known as Ali Ufki Bey, who was a promising statesman but also a rising star in the field of Ottoman music. He lived alone. We don't know how he died and how he spent his last days. But the work he wrote on his years in Enderun is well worth reading, as it offers considerable insight into the Enderun system.

The boys who lived in the big and small chambers served the court at the same time as they learned etiquette, science and the arts. Once it became noticed that they were valuable and competent, they were promoted to a higher level on the personal order of the sultan.

Enderun aghas would rise with the morning call to prayer, after which, if required, they would go to the Turkish bath. Having performing the obligatory morning prayers, daily life would begin. Careless and improper behaviour at the dinner table would be met with a reprimand or a punishment such as a smack on the hand with a ladle. If an agha addressed someone disrespectfully, behaved rudely, was unruly, or did not abide by the strict dress code, he would be severely punished.

Enderun members were expected to behave towards one another in a disciplined and formal manner. This rigid lifestyle strongly resembles that of the Jesuit sect in the sixteenth century. The fact that people have alleged that those in Enderun behaved uncouthly is a sign of how little we know about this institution.

After graduating from the two chambers mentioned above, boys would move to the *Seferli Koğuşu* (Dormitory of the Expeditionary Force Pages). This chamber was established in the seventeenth century when Murat IV took Enderun aghas with him on military expeditions. It was termed the Dormitory of the Expeditionary Force Pages since the boys from that dormitory who were chosen to accompany Murat IV had to carry out their duties amidst the demanding conditions of war. The two chambers situated where the treasury is today were built on the orders of Mehmet II. They are the dormitory of the 'Pantrymen' (*Kilerliler*) and the dormitory of the 'Private Treasurer' (*Hazinedar*). The Enderun aghas in the first of these, which is on the left, worked in the pantry as well as serving the sultan himself, and among them were some very eminent palace officials. Today, this is where the office of the director of the Topkapıı Palace is located.

When they were appointed to service outside the palace, graduates from the Enderun who had reached the *kaftanlı* class would start, at least, at the rank of brigadier general. For instance, someone who had been an agha in the dormitory of Pantrymen was eligible to take the rank of Beylerbey. To be sure, the elite of the Enderun aghas were the *has odalılar* (people of the Privy Chamber), who were supervised by the head of the Privy Chamber (*has odabaşı*), a vizier with the rank of marshal of the palace. Their particularity was reflected in very interesting ways. For example, in the Mosque of the Aghas in Enderun they would perform namaz together with the emperor in a special section decorated with porcelain panels, while aghas from the other dormitories did their namaz in a different section where the walls were simply whitewashed. Thus we can see that differences in rank were reflected not just in forms of dress and address but also in place of worship.

Due to their important position, the has *odalılar* were also responsible for guarding the sacred possessions of the Prophet and the caliph, the so-called *Emanat-ı Mukadıdese*, in the porcelain-plated rooms of the palace. The head of the Privy Chamber had the rank of Palace marshal. Next in order of status was the chief sword bearer (*silahtar ağa*), with the rank of first aide-de-camp, who was in charge of protocol at ceremonies. The hierarchy continued in this way.

Enderun was an institution in which the future ruling class of the empire was trained. And it is not difficult to see that the

devşirme graduates, who were largely from remote villages of the Balkans and the Caucasus, really were educated to be, and became, members of a superior class. It would be no exaggeration to say that it was these statesmen that built up the state's image, not only through their physical appearance but also through their demeanour. No foreigner or travelling writer that came to Istanbul could resist depicting a parade in which these young men participated, and describing them at great length. Ordinary members of the public and foreigners in Istanbul attended ceremonies outside the palace such as the Sword Procession and the Friday Ceremony primarily in order to see the Enderun boys. They marvelled at their physical grandeur, their garments, and especially the plumed ornament on the turban of the sultan or a high official, which was known as *peyk*. Few travel books from the Ottoman times are without copper engravings of the Ottoman high and mighty attending ceremonies. There can be little wonder why, while watching one of these splendid ceremonies, a poor dervish from the Bektashi sect turned his eyes to the heavens and said: 'Oh Allah! Look at the servants of an emperor, and now look at my wretched state, the humble servant of a God.'

Among those who emerged from the Enderun there were exceptional musicians, such as Ali Ufki Bey, whom we encountered above. There were men who went down in history because of their sporting achievements. There were also people who made a name for themselves in the fields of literature and philosophy. But above all, for at least three centuries, the Enderun supplied the marshals of the Ottoman Empire. Needless to say, among the marshals we also find devirmes who did not make it to the Enderun, most of whom were classed as *acemioğlan*[31], and spent time learning the Turkish language and Islam in the villages around Istanbul. However, the attitude and manner of the Enderun agha was different. Enderun shows us that aristocracy need not be hereditary but can also be created through education. The designation 'School for the Empire' is very fitting. Interestingly, though, most of the research on the Enderun has been carried out by foreigners, who are interested in comprehending how the Ottoman government worked by scrutinising its basic organs.

In the nineteenth century, though, the Enderun was pushed to the margins. This is because it was replaced by modern educational establishments such as the School of Political Science, the School of Law and the Military Academy. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Enderun was abolished, together with all the smaller bodies associated with it.

Today, where the Enderun used to be there are four sections displaying the clothes and treasures of the emperor. As mentioned above, the dormitory of the Pantrymen has been replaced by the office

of the Palace director. The dormitory of the Private Treasurer now houses a collection of clocks. Portraits and sacred relics are to be found in the Privy Chamber. The Mosque of the Aghas, in the middle of the square, maintains its fame as the manuscripts section. At the end of the former Enderun section, a door leads from the courtyard into the Harem. In some sense, the Harem was the place where the girls of this new ruling class were raised and trained. These females, who were either *devşirmes* or bought and brought in, were educated not only to be the wives and concubines of the sultan but also to have a better fortune and alternative prospects.

But let us return to the Enderun. This was the section of the Palace that contained the Ottoman treasury and the personal treasury of the sultan (*iç hazine*), and this treasury was always closed with the seal of Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan, probably because the Treasury enjoyed its greatest prosperity during his reign. In the centre of the Enderun courtyard is the elegant library carrying the name of Ahmet III, the emperor particularly fond of calligraphy and reading. Today, however, there are almost no manuscripts left in this library, as they are stored in the Mosque of the Aghas.

What is striking about the Ottoman education system is that it was not so much concerned with creating an elite class based on heredity as with selecting and then training competent young people who could make the most of their abilities. In this sense, the Enderun was quite a unique historical phenomenon. The Ottoman Empire was not the only state to use a *kul* (slave) or, in other words, devşirme system. The Mamluks used one too, as did certain khanates in Central Asia. A similar system could be observed in the Roman Empire. The most distinct form of organisation, though, was found in the Enderun.

In Chapter III on the devşirmes, I provided some information about how pupils were educated. Once every three or four years, recruiting authorities would select boys from the Balkans, but especially the Caucasus, who would be taken to the Galata Palace, the Edirne Palace or the Palace of Ibrahim Pasha in Sultanahmet. Until the end of the seventeenth century, these palaces had an educational function. It was only after this that the devirme system changed and other boys came to Enderun.

As in the barracks inhabited by the *Acemioğlans*, the young pupils of the Enderun gave each other nicknames, and these stuck to them for the rest of their lives. Viziers and grand viziers bore nicknames based on their physical imperfections such as ‘Tabanyass’ (flat-footed), ‘Boynueri’ (curved-neck) and ‘Semiz’ (fatty), or that said something about their personalities, like ‘Öküz’ (ox),[32] ‘Kalaylıkoz’ (phoney), and ‘Yahnikapan’ (stew-lid)[33]. Sokullu Mehmet Pasha acquired his nickname ‘tavil’, meaning ‘tall’, at Enderun. The tradition

of nicknaming continued both at the prestigious Galatasaray Lycйe and in the School of Political Science. The nicknames of other people derived from their professions, with an example being *Kemankeş* (archer).

Based on the capacity for service and learning that they had demonstrated at the Edirne or Galata Palace, some students were taken to Topkapı when they were fifteen or sixteen. As they learned more and gained more experience at serving, they were promoted to a higher chamber, and it continued like this. Some of those who entered Enderun spent their entire lives in this courtyard and inside the Palace. But there were also boys who rose to the rank of head of the Privy Chamber, chief of the Private Treasury, chief cloth bearer (*Çuhadar ağa*) and chief weapons bearer, before going on to serve as beylerbey or even vizier.

We should not get bogged down in comparing Enderun with its alleged counterparts in the modern world. It is, for instance, both accurate and misleading to compare it with the School of Political Science. Enderun was certainly not a feudal school in the classical sense. Its members were subject to strict selection, observation and monitoring. They gained promotion as they served. The truth is that this class of people knew how to serve and managed to maintain a certain image, perspective and mentality, doing so with elegance. This is why a special atmosphere and type of person evolved in the Enderun. And this is how the Enderun managed to take people born in various localities—in Slavic-speaking areas and in places where Greek or Albanian were spoken—and unite them around the language, style, rituals and activities of the palace.

Normally, people who emerged from the Palace retained something of their origins in their pronunciation. Examples of this could be seen until very recently. Indeed, during the first twenty-five to thirty years after the Topkapı Palace was transformed into a museum, the civil servants working there included people with this linguistic feature. At the Enderun, though, a person's links with his former language, religion and tribe were severed in the course of time. He became part of a new cultural milieu. This was also the case with the inhabitants of the Harem, and in the midst of that milieu (which for some was entirely new) they would remain loyal to just one element of their past: their memories. They could not step outside that milieu. An Enderun graduate could suddenly find himself promoted to vizier and working in the remote provinces of the empire, as happened to Mustafa Pasha, the nephew of Sokullu Mehmet Pasha, who was appointed as Beylerbey of Budin. One day, a sergeant major brought Mustafa Pasha a satin bag containing a ferman for the Pasha's execution, which Mustafa Pasha simply accepted submissively. Why?

Because graduates of the Enderun had no one or nothing to trust but the state. This is one reason why graduates from the Enderun were not popular with their peers, other reasons being the inevitable competition between different institutions, and the superior skills, and occasional arrogance, of the Enderun boys. *Acemioğlans*, for instance, called them 'palace rats', and even the *ulema* and medrese-graduated members of the *kalemiyye* (civil service) regarded their 'enemies' from the Enderun in the same way.

We should not forget that, in the Enderun, the Ottomans tried to train loyal commanders who were to lead the Empire, and their loyalty was of utmost importance. Some became viziers or led the Janissary Corps, while others wielded power at different levels of the state or within the civil service. None of them ever forgot, though, that they were slaves of the sultan and belonged to the class which was there to serve the sultan. They understood well what was meant by the state and its unity. This is why Ogier Ghiselin von Busbeck, the ambassador of the Austro-German Empire who came to the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, made the following comment on the Ottoman state, a comment with a noticeable dose of idealism and envy: 'The people that rule the Turkish state, the state and empire of the Ottoman Turks, are competent, rich, and attractive. They acquire the ranks they have by working, improving themselves, and making an effort. They do not have a hereditary aristocracy as we do. This is why theirs is an empire ruled not by the incapable but by the capable, and why it is growing, improving and seizing control of the future.'

The Enderun system gradually disappeared in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mirroring the demise of the devirme system. The translation chamber within the *Bab-ı Ali*, into which skilful young people were recruited during the *Tanzimat* Period, trained very important people such as the grand viziers Mehmet Emin Ali Pasha and Midhad Pasha.

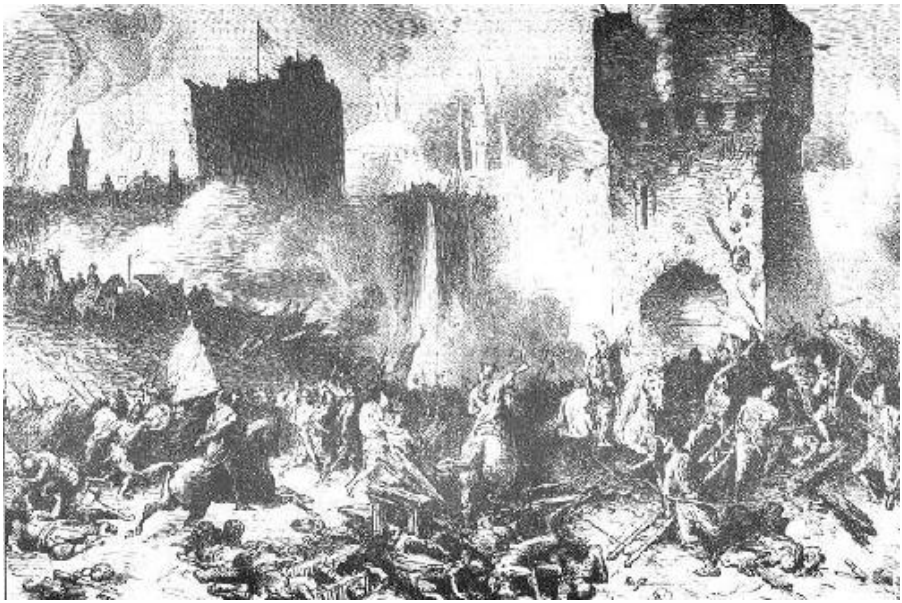
The Enderun stands for everything that was original about the Ottoman tradition of training statesmen. The precedent it set made it much easier in the nineteenth century to create boarding schools offering scholarships such as the School of Medicine, the School of Veterinary Medicine, and the School of Engineering, as well as schools of administration such as the Galatasaray Lycйe and the School of Political Science in Ankara. In the Enderun and in the Harem, the Ottoman Empire moulded a ruling and courtly class out of people with skills and the potential for improvement rather than out of those who had noble blood. The Empire also succeeded in preventing the rise within its territory of other khanates besides the Ottoman one. This is another aspect and achievement of the Enderun school that needs to

be examined further.

THE LAST ROMAN EMPIRE

The Ottoman Empire was the last Roman Empire in history. Statements of this kind have aroused a great deal of controversy in the academic and political discourse of Turkey. One reason is that people clearly do not know what the concept of Rome signifies. But this is quite striking, as Rome constitutes the foundation of modern civilization and of our legal and administrative structures. Yet despite the pervasiveness of the Roman system, most nations in the world do not grasp this. Western Europeans think they have understood all that needs to be understood about this period and that what the Romans set out achieve has been achieved. At the same time, because of unsound historiography and flaws in the way history is taught, people in Greece today see the Roman Empire as an era of decline, brutality, debauchery and scandal, and they continue to teach it this way, internalising such views as they do so. This perspective has its roots in the West too; however, the Greeks somehow regard the Roman Empire as a degenerated version of their own civilisation.

Unfortunately, conceptions of the Roman Empire in contemporary Turkey are hardly more enlightened, although there is no reason why this should be so. Indeed, there is even an entirely pointless debate going on around the use of the taboo term ‘Empire’. People associate ‘Empire’ with ‘imperialism’. These two concepts, however, had very little in common, especially in the Roman era; indeed, in Roman times, ‘imperialism’ was certainly not used in a negative sense. The situation has become so bad that—and here sociology education has a lot to answer for—nineteenth century colonialist France, the France of Napoleon III, has been presented as the model of an empire, while the Ottoman state has been described as a state that had nothing in common with this sinful and disgraceful entity. Thus, people who would find it difficult to recount the history of the concept of the state have found fit to make a distinction between a state and an empire.



All of this makes it abundantly clear that our thinkers on history and politics do not really understand the Roman mentality and the structure of the Roman Empire. This was not the case with our ancestors however. For them, Rome signified a global empire. Building such an empire was a mission, and those who were reluctant or unable to shoulder this political responsibility would leave this task to those that followed them.

In fact, for our ancestors, Rome and Roman sovereignty meant gaining possession of what was called *Diyar- Rum* or *İklim-i Rum* (the Land of the *Rums*) and this mission was not the job of the Greek-speaking community of Central Anatolia, Western Anatolia and Asia Minor. It was up to the Seljuks and the Ottomans to take up that mission. The Ottomans did so and had no doubts that they needed to capture the capital of the new Rome, Istanbul, an objective which they achieved.

The ruler of the Turks was simultaneously the Turkish Hakan (ruler), the caliph of all Muslims, and the *Kayzer-i Rum*, or Caesar of Rome. It should be noted that, contrary to a legend made up in eighteenth century Turkey, the title of caliph did not come into usage only in the sixteenth century when Yavuz Sultan Selim took control of Hejaz and Cairo as part of his expansion into the Middle East. Records show that emperors prior to Yavuz Sultan Selim had used the title caliph and that others had invoked it too. This, at least, is what the official chroniclers of the Ottoman state tell us. What is more, neither Yavuz Sultan Selim nor Süleyman the Magnificent used

the title caliph as much as the later emperors Abdülhamit Khan II and Sultan Abdülaziz were to do.

One thing should be made quite clear: the key actor in the history of the last Roman Empire was the Muslim Turk. After all, the language of the army was Turkish and the army was a Turkish institution. *Devşirmes* were recruited, but those children spoke Turkish, became Ottoman, and the *Kapıkulu* Corps that was formed from these recruits was the core of the central army. This was not the case with the armies of the Ottoman Empire's populous neighbours. Throughout its history, the main element of this Turkish state was its military, and here Turkish was always used, without exception.

Interestingly enough, the language used in the embassies and consular services of the Empire was Turkish too. That is, even if the language was not particularly widely spoken, Turkish was used in every period. One would be entirely mistaken in thinking that, at some point in time and in some Turkish state, an application or petition written in Turkish could have been rejected because the authorities dealing with it claimed they could not understand it. Of course, nothing could be more natural than the consular service of the Great Seljuk State based in Iran using Persian. But there is not a single shred of evidence that Turkish was not in use in the bureaucracy of that country. In any case, the language of command in the army of that country was Turkish.

There is one more issue that deserves our attention. Throughout history, other peoples lived and worked together with the Turks, and as long as they remained there, elements of their cultures and histories influenced the cultural life and cultural texture of the Turks. In the fields of folklore and sociology, we find the interesting German expression of 'Volksfrommigkeit', meaning 'popular piety'. Quite fascinatingly, in the Ottoman context we sometimes find Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions all mixed up together: Christians would visit the tombs of Muslim saints; in Istanbul, Muslims would follow a tradition of participating in Christian celebrations, such as the Feast of the Virgin Mary; and we know well that some Jewish traditions were readily adopted by Muslims. What this means is that some institutions, practices, and actors in Ottoman state and society manifested the possibility of transition.

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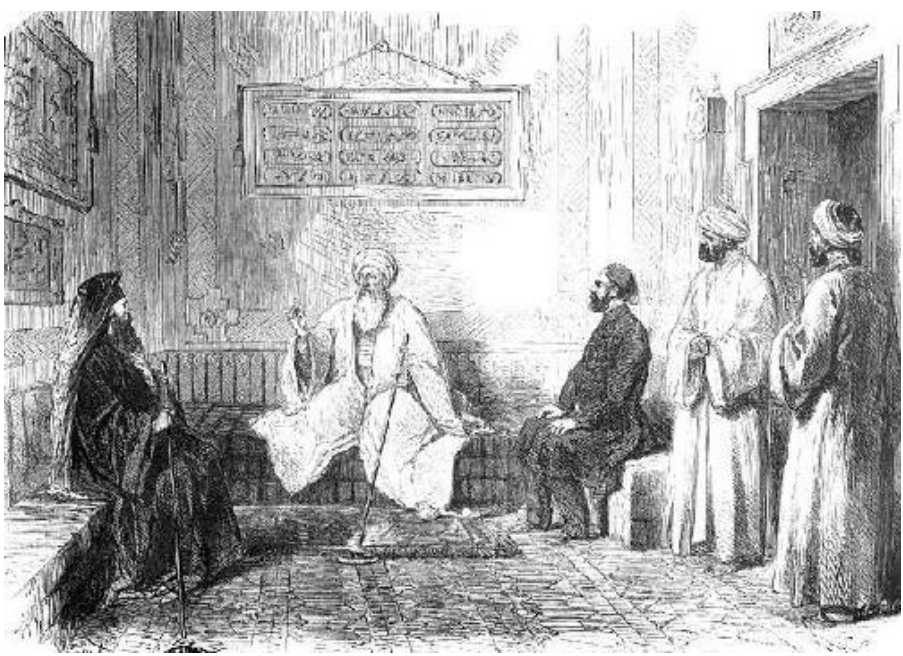
To put it bluntly, Ottoman history is the history of us Turks, the history of the Turkish state. At the same time, though, it is the shared history of the more than ten nations that live in the twenty or so states in this part of the world, each of which has been home to tribes speaking different languages and following different religions. We have to accept these facts. Once we do, we will appreciate that,

without a knowledge of Ottoman history and of Turkish, it is impossible for people in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus or Southern Russia to study history and to gain an awareness of history. That is to say, unless they know Turkish and go into the Turkish sources, there is no way that they can they write the history of their own nations. Somehow the Hungarians and the Israelis (the latter being the latest newcomers to this region) have understood this. Unfortunately, the other former peoples of the Ottoman Empire cannot be said to have displayed the same insight. The situation, though, applies the other way around too. That is, we cannot understand the history, life and ideologies of this magnificent empire just by looking at the Turkish-Ottoman sources.

Can a person with just a smattering of Arabic and Persian and with at most mediocre Ottoman Turkish call themself an Ottoman historian? The answer is 'no'. And it is equally impossible for someone to understand the origins and characteristics of the Ottoman state if they do not know Greek and are not familiar with the Byzantine Empire, and if they have no knowledge of the political and social culture of the Slavs in the Middle Ages. Can they understand the Ottomans without being versed in the Arabic culture of the mediaeval Middle East? Again, the answer must be no!



There are those who say that 'The Ottoman state became arabised in the sixteenth century.' Of course, they are just mouthing platitudes and drawing hasty conclusions. Did such a process of

arabisation take place? Had the elements needed for such an extraordinary change emerged, and what were they? How on earth can a Turkish historian or social scientist make such a childish claim, without having studied the Arab world of the Fatimid and Mamluk periods and without examining the Syria, Baghdad, Damascus and Palestine of that time? The problems I have referred to are critical, but our academics and establishment of higher education seem to be going down the wrong path when it comes to research. And it is extremely difficult to see how a historiography that fails to present our young people with accurate information and insights in summary form can contribute to their perception of our national history.

Today, a history student at a university in France or even in Russia reads and knows what was going in the parts of the Arab world that the Ottomans conquered; the same can not be said of students in Turkey. Not even a tiny paragraph has been written on the subject. In our books, you will not find a single paragraph on what the Balkans were like before the arrival of the Ottomans or how life changed afterwards. When we read Ivo Andric's novel The Bridge over the Drina, which won the author the Nobel Prize, we were all shocked and excited[3]4. Think about the situation: we had never been told anything about this history, and then a historical novel set in the environs of the Drina Bridge and written by an important Croatian nationalist Ivo Andric captivated us, even if the content was not particularly to our liking. Why did it have this impact? Because we knew nothing about that world.

Here is another striking observation. Neither in the eighteenth nor the nineteenth centuries did Turkish scholars produce a grand synthesis of the history of the Ottoman Empire. The people to do it were an Austrian scholar named Joseph Hammer von Purgstall and the little-known German historian Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen. Without consulting sources in the Turkish archives—Zinkeisen did not even know Turkish—but following up the references to this global empire in the archives of Venice, Austria, Germany and France, Hammer and Zinkeisen managed to create remarkably voluminous accounts of the history of the Ottoman Empire. Whoever you ask today will tell you that these are outdated and no longer valid. But as long as we don't replace our old shoes with new ones, we have to go on wearing the old ones, come rain or snow. For this reason, it is difficult to see how anyone can delve into a historical topic without first consulting Hammer, a point that I cannot stress enough. But society at large also needs to be presented with serious treatments of this immense empire. What is needed is popular literature and historical literature that will find acceptance among the masses. Until very recently, though, nothing like this existed. People of my

generation encountered this history through the pages of the popular *Hayat Tarih Mecmuas* (Hayat History Magazine). Until then, secondary school and university students and anyone else who was interested had had nowhere to turn if they were looking for an alternative and gripping account of the past.

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Ottoman historical sources are an enigma. We know that this empire appeared at the beginning of the fourteenth century, although Professor Halil nalck puts it somewhat later. However, for the next 150 or so years, until the 1450's in other words, we hear nothing about the story of this empire from the Turks of that time. That is to say, all of the first wave of chroniclers, such as Ak Paşazade, Oruç Bey and Mehmet Nesri, appeared between the middle and the end of the fifteenth century. Of course, in the histories they wrote, they related everything they had heard about the past. We do not know for sure which written sources they drew on and, more interestingly, what kind of world-view shaped their recounting of historical events. For instance, no copies have survived of works by Yah Fakih, whom Ak Paşazade gives as a source. A history book written in 1350 would probably show us events from a quite different perspective. After all, the venerable historians of the fifteenth century I mentioned above were historians writing in the atmosphere of an empire.

The Germans have a very nice expression for such

chroniclers: 'Reichshistoriker', meaning 'state-' or 'imperial historians'. In the very era when Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror had captured Bosnia, Albania and Istanbul and was the ruler of a great state which had emerged as a world power, these chroniclers were writing about the foundation of *Devlet-i Aliyye*. Could they have done anything else but imbue the foundation with a very different atmosphere from the one it originally had? Legend can easily get mixed up with reality. The most improbable things can come to light. Unfortunately, contemporary historical research is no more reliable and, as far as I see it, unless we delve deep into the archives of states contemporary to the Ottomans such as the Mamluks, Venice, Tuscany and Genoa, it will be much more difficult to acquire new data in the future. And there is one more nut to crack which, for philological reasons, is especially tough: the archives related to fifteen and sixteenth-century Moscow, which are rich but have not yet been used.

The kind of challenges we encounter when researching into the foundation period of the Ottoman Empire apply to other areas of investigation too. Whichever register you look at, you will not be able to find records about land-ownership or tax dating back before the fifteenth century. The first published registers and official consular records were the *Ahkam Defterleri* (Regulation and Prescription Registers), a series of which has been brought out with great success by the state archive of the Prime Ministry. These documents are also being examined by various colleagues in the humanities, but they too have stated outright that the sources do not go back any further. For this reason, we have no choice but to try to discover and understand the history of an immense worldwide empire about whose existence we have no doubts but whose older secrets lie shrouded in darkness. As writers, educated people and ordinary citizens, we Turks are experts at misunderstanding and misinterpreting the Ottoman Empire, and believing that things were the exact opposite of the way they actually were. Let us hope that we will make up for this in the future.

GLOSSARY

The following are Turkish (mostly Ottoman) terms that occur with considerable frequency within the text. The decision of whether or not to italicise a term has usually been governed by the example of the Oxford English Dictionary. For more extensive glossaries, see Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs and Effendis: a Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1997), John Freely, Inside the Seraglio: Private Lives of the Sultans in Istanbul (London: Viking, 1999) and Halil nalck, The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600 (London: Phoenix, 1994).

Ağa / Agha -'Master'. A title assigned to various notables, including the commander of the Janissary Corps.

Ağa Kapısı -Literally, 'The Gate of the Agha'. Used to denote the headquarters of the commander of the Janissary Corps.

Arz Odas -The Audience Chamber of the sultan in the Topkapı Palace.

Asar-ı Atika -Antiquities.

Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi -Regulation on Ancient Artefacts.

At Meydanı - Hippodrome. The Ottoman name for Sultanahmet Square.

Bab-ı Ali - Literally, 'The Sublime Porte', meaning (among other things) the office of the grand vizier in the Topkapı Palace.

Bab-ı Hümayun - The Imperial Gate.

Babü's saade - The Gate of Felicity.

Babüsselam - The Gate of Salutation. (Also known as Orta Kapı, Middle Gate).

Bahriye Naziri - The Admiralty.

Bey - Literally, 'chieftain'. The governor of a smallish territorial unit within (and prior to) the Empire. Also used as a courtesy title.

Beylik - The territory ruled by a Bey.

Beylerbey - Literally, 'Bey of Beys'. The governor of a large province consisting of multiple Beyliks. Initially used for the governor of a *vilayet*, later also applied to the governor of smaller *eyalets*. Somewhat equivalent to 'governor general'.

Beylerbeylik - The territory ruled by a Beylerbey.

Damat - A man who marries into the family of the sultan.

Defterdar - Generally, an accountant or treasurer. Used specifically to refer to the chief official in the Ottoman treasurer.

Devlet-i Aliyye - Literally, 'The Sublime State'. A synonym for the Ottoman Empire.

Devşirme - The levy of male children for the Janissary Corps. Also used to refer to an individual recruit.

Dıvan-I Hümɞyun - The Imperial Council that convened in the Topkapı Palace under the chairmanship of the grand vizier.

Enderun - Literally, 'Interior' or 'Inner section'. The school in the Topkapı Palace for particularly promising *devşirmes*.

Eyalet - A medium-sized administrative unit within the Empire (subordinate to a Beylerbeylik).

Gülbank - The battle cry raised by Janissaries before an attack.

Gulgule - The yell produced by Janissaries during the distribution of their salary.

Harem -The women's quarters within the Topkapı Palace and any other Ottoman house or palace. Inhabited by wives and concubines of the sultan as well as other females being primed to be wives of sultans or other notables.

Has Odası - Privy Chamber.

Hazinedar - Treasurer.

Istanbul Ruusu - A qualification showing successful graduation from a medrese.

Janissary (Yeniçeri) - A member of the Janissary Corps, the elite unit of the imperial army, consisting largely of *devşirmes* and prisoners-of-war.

Kadı - An official with training in Islamic law. Functioned as the judge and mayor of the territory to which he was appointed, as well as carrying out various other administrative duties.

Kapıkulu - Literally, 'Door slave', i.e. a soldier who was entirely subordinate to the sultan. The Kapkulu Corps was the standing army of the Empire, directly accountable to the sultan. It consisted of infantrymen, cavalrymen and members of the technical class.

Kaptan- Derya -Admiral of the Fleet.

Kasr-ı Adl - The Tower of Justice. The structure above the meeting-place of the Imperial Council.

Kazasker - Formed from the words Kadı and *Asker* (soldier). The *kazaskers* were the chief military judges of the Beylerbeyliks of Anatolia and Rumelia.

Kubbealtı - Literally, 'Under the dome'. The venue for meetings of the Imperial Council.

Kubbenişin rical - Participants in the Imperial Council.

Medeni Kanun **-** Civil Code of the Turkish Republic (adopted 1926).

Medrese **-** Islamic school of higher learning.

Mektep-i Harbiye **-** Military Academy.

Mekteb-i Mülkiye **-** School of Administration.

Millet **-** A national or religious community within the Ottoman Empire.

Müderris **-** Teacher at a medrese.

Mülkiye **-** The School of Political Science at Ankara University.

Mufti **-** The provincial director of religious affairs.

Müze-i Hümayun **-** Imperial Museum (established 1869).

Nişancı **-** A member of the Imperial Council, and the official responsible for, among other things, appending the monogram of the sultan to all official documents.

Padishah - Sultan.

Pasha - A title awarded by the sultan to high-ranking civilian and military officials.

Phanariot -A *Rum* from the Fener quarter of Istanbul, many of whom were influential within the government and administration of the Ottoman Empire.

Rum **-** Generally used to refer to a member of the Greek millet within the Ottoman Empire or an ethnically Greek citizen of the Turkish Republic.

Rumelia **-** A Beylerbeylik of the Ottoman Empire, consisting roughly of the area of Thrace.

Sadrazam **-** Grand (chief) vizier.

Sanjak **-** Literally, 'flag'. An administrative unit subsidiary to a Beylerbeylik.

Sanjakbey - The ruler of a Sanjak.

Saray-i Amire **-** An older name for the Topkapı Palace, meaning 'The Imperial Palace'.

Şehzade **-** The son of a sultan.

Sheikh ul-Islam **-** The ultimate authority on Islam in the Empire.

Silahtar ağa **-** Chief sword bearer.

Sipahi **-** A cavalryman who provided military service to the sultan in exchange for feudal tenure or who belonged to the Sipahi Corps, one of the six elite cavalry divisions .

Tanzimat **-** The period of governmental and administrative reform between 1839 and 1876.

Telhis **-** A written communication between the grand vizier and the sultan.

Timar **-** A military fiefdom with a value of less than 20,000 akçes.

Ulema **-** The singular and plural form of the name for a member of the class of Islamic scholars of canon law.

Valide sultan **-** The mother of the ruling sultan.

Vilayet **-** A large province.

Vezir-i azam **-** Grand vizier.

Yeniçeri Ağası **-** The commander of the Janissary Corps.

1 Translator`s note: The Janissary corps (Yeniçeri ocağı in Turkish)was the elite unit of the imperial army.
2 Translator's note: The battle cry raised by janissaries before an attack.
3 Translator's note: The yell produced by janissaries during the distribution of their salary.
4 Translator's note: This was the standing army of the empire, directly accountable to the sultan.
5 Translator's note: 'Pasha' (Turkish 'pa a') was a title awarded by the Ottoman sultan to high-ranking civilian and military officials.
6 Translator's note: Ottoman vilayets (provinces)
7 Translator's note: Sanjakbey was the title of a bey (a prominent officer, although rarely a general) in military and administrative command of a sanjak (district)
8 Translator's note: Historians of the Ottoman Empire generally date this age as extending from 1300 to 1600.
9 Translator's note: The *Sipahi* Corps was one of the six elite cavalry divisions within the imperial army.
10 Translator's note: Although Bab-ı ali literally means 'high gate' and might appear just to denote the physical entrance to the Ottoman court it was also used metonymically to refer to the government of the empire, the sultan, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and Istanbul. In addition, in the final years of the Empire, Bab-ı Ali stood for the building in which the grand vizier worked, and this is the sense in which the author uses it here.
11 The kazasker was both the chief military judge and leading member of the Islamic judiciary.
12 Translator's note: 'Agha' ('ağa' in turkish) means 'master' and was a title assigned to various notables, including the commander of the Janissary Corps.
13 Translator's note: Restoration work was completed in 2008, and the *Konak* is now being used as a museum

14 Translator's note: This attack was part of the Fourth Crusade.
15 Translator's note: A *khangah* is a building constructed for hosting gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood.
16 Translator's note: A *dergah* is a Sufi shrine constructed on top of the grave of an important spiritual leader. It often includes other buildings with a social and religious function.
17 Translator's note: The dictionary of the Turkish Language Foundation, the Türk Dil Kurumu, gives three definitions for the important term rum, which Arabic derivation. Firstly,it refers to a person of Greek origin living in a Muslim country.Secondly it means all the people living within the boundaries of the Eastern Roman Empire,who possessed the rights of Roman citizens. The third definition, an archaism, is the territory of Anatolia. The first definition is the most widely used and accepted one, although in this work the author occosionally seems to use the the term with the second meaning.
18 Translator's note: The author does not specify what he means by 'Ottomanism' but it is generally taken as meaning the freedom of all ethnic and religious communities within the Empire to preserve their difference.
19 Translator's note: *Damat* was the title given to a man married into the sultan's family. This form of address is still used by the in-laws of a man, before, during and after a wedding.
20 Translator's note: A *haseki* was a concubine of a sultan, who gave birth to a child.
21 Translator's note: A *mahya* is a banner consisting of lights that form words or pictures. It is dropped between two minarets of a mosque, especially during the month of Ramadan.
22 Translator's note: the '31st March Incıdent' (31 Mart Vakası) refers to an unsuccessful rebellion in 1909 by forces attempting to bring to a close the recently established Second Constitutional Era in the Ottoman Empire and to halt the increasing influence of the Committee of Union and Progress. A key aim was to shift the balance of power back to Sultan Abdulhamit II, who had been forced to concede some degree of parliamentary involvement, but the rebellion backfired as it was crushed and the sultan deposed.
23 Translator's note: The *Rikab-ı hümayun* was the vizier whom the sultan authorised to take charge of crucial business when he himself was away on a military campaign.
24 Translator's note: The nişancı was responsible for appending the monogram of the sultan to all official documents.
25 Translator's note: One of the two medical schools attached to Istanbul University also bears his name.
26 Translator's note: *Asafname* is a treatise on Ottoman government,

which is generally regarded as a crucial source for anyone interested in Ottoman political history.

27 Translator's note: The Phanariots were a section of the *Rum* community who had traditionally lived in the Istanbul district of Fener (on the banks of the Golden Horn) and who assumed crucial roles in the Ottoman administration and government.

28 Translator's note: Mustafa Kemal is the proper name of the military leader and revolutionary who would later be the primary force behind the foundation and development of the Turkish Republic. In 1934, the Turkish parliament voted to give him the epithet *Atatürk*, meaning 'father of the Turks'.

29 Translator`s note: A beylerbeylik was a (large) territory governed by a beylerbey.

30 This title (hidiv in Turkish),meaning 'prince regent' and referring to the semi-autonomous governor of Egypt,came to be used after the revolt led by Mehmet Ali Pasha,the governor of Egypt,in the 1830's.

31 Translator's note: These were either Janissary recruits or apprentices in other,less prestigious,sections of the Topkapı Palace.

32 Translator's note: The author does not actually specify what the nickname 'Oküz' assigned to certain Ottoman dignitaries implied.In the case of Kara Mehmet Pasha it is said to have referred to both his heavy build and the fact that his father had worked as a blackmith for cattle in Istanbul.'Öküz',though,can also have the same negative connotations as the English'ox'.

33 Translator's note: While he was still a student at the Beyazid medrese,Abdülkerim Pasha,the later minister of finance of the Empire,is said to have acquired the epithet 'Yahnikapan' because of his fondness for the meals served at soup kitchens for the poor.

34 Translator's note: This novel,which includes a fictionalised representation of the story of Sokullu Mehmet Pasha,deals in panoramic fashion with relations between the different ethnic and religious groups in the Bosnian town of Višegrad under Ottoman rule.